

Hegel's Logic of Essence and the Ontology of Power in Capitalism

by
Arash Abazari

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I develop a critical theory of society in capitalism on the basis of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. I pursue two parallel aims: Firstly, I demonstrate that the ontology that Hegel develops in the logic of essence is the ontology of power. This means that power is not external to the structure of individuals, but constitutes them. Secondly, I demonstrate that Hegel's ontology of power is historically specific; namely, it captures the structure of social domination in capitalism. In order to do this, I substantially use Marx's mature critique of political economy in *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*, as well as Adorno's later social theory.

I reconstruct the logic of essence on the basis of three major concepts: "illusion" [Schein], "opposition" [Gegensatz], and "totality" [Totalität]. These three concepts cohere with each other, and together, constitute a system of domination. In this system of domination, which is specific to capitalism, individuals seem to be equal with each other. Yet, the seeming equality is an illusion that conceals the essential relations of domination. However, the illusion of equality is not simply a cognitive failure that can be rooted out through enlightened reasoning. Rather, the illusion of equality is constitutive of the structure of domination. Furthermore, I argue that individuals are essentially the product of the relation of opposition that obtains between them, and that opposition is a relation of domination.

I demonstrate that essence for Hegel is tantamount to totality, and that opposition and illusion function as necessary moments of it. The totality of essence is solely constituted through the interrelation of individuals, yet it has contradictorily a life of its

own that obtains independently of individuals. I argue that the totality exerts absolute power over individuals, and forces them, on pain of perishing, to follow its logic.

Individuals have an illusion that they have power over each other, yet it is the power of totality that works through them, renders one powerful and the other powerless. I argue that the power of totality over individuals has a non-volitional, and impersonal character, and thus functions as a blind spell from which nobody can flee. Under the spell of total domination, individuals have the illusion that they are self-determining. What seems to them to be their own freedom, however, is merely the product of contingency.

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Note on Abbreviations and Citations

I have often modified the translations in order to make them more precise, or more appropriate to the context of my discussion.

HEGEL

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Werke in zwanzig Bänden (WW)*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986. Cited either by page number or by section number. In the case of the latter, if the citation is from the Addition, the section number is followed by Z.

WdL I& II, SL

Wissenschaft der Logik, [*Science of Logic (SL)*, trans. A. V. Miller, New York, Humanities Press, 1969]

EnzL.

Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften I. Erster Teil. Die Wissenschaft der Logik. [*Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part I, Science of Logic*, trans. K. Brinkmann & D. Dahlstrom. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.]

GPR

Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts [*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. Nisbet, ed. A. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991]

PhG

Phänomenologie des Geistes [*Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. T. Pinkard, accessed at <http://terrypinkard.weebly.com/phenomenology-of-spirit-page.html>]

EnzN.

Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften. Zweiter Teil. Die Naturphilosophie. [*The Philosophy of Nature: Being Part Two of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. D. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004.]

EnzG.

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WW 4

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WW 12, LPH

Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte [*The Philosophy of World History*, trans. John Sibree, 1956 [1857], New York: Dover]

WW 17, LPEG

Vorlesungen über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes [*Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* trans. Peter C. Hodgson, Oxford University Press, 2007]

WW 18-20, LHP I-III

Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I-III [*Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane, Frances H. Simon, Kegan Paul Publisher (1895), reprint Thoemmes Press, 1999]

GW

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MEW 23, C I

Das Kapital: Band I [*Capital: Volume One*, trans. B. Fowkes, London: Penguin, 1976]

MEW 24, C II

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MEW 42, G

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MEW 1, MECW 3

Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie

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MEW 3, MECW 5

Die deutsche Ideologie (Marx and Engels)

MEW 4, MECW 6

Das Elend der Philosophie: Antwort auf Proudhons 'Philosophie des Elends'

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MEW 13, MECW 29

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MEW 19, MECW 24

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MEW 20, MECW 25

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MEW 21, MECW 26

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GS 5, *Three Studies*

Drei Studien zu Hegel [*Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen; Cambridge: MIT press, 1993]

GS 6

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Einführung in die Dialektik (1958)

NS-V 6

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NS-V 12

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NS-V 13, HF

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GLW 2

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GLW 11

Die Eigenart des Ästhetischen, 1. Halbband

GLW 13 & 14

Prolegomena zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins (I & II)

SPINOZA

E

Spinoza Baruch. *Ethics*, trans. G.H.R. Parkinson, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, cited in the following order, book number, d (definition), a (axiom), p (proposition), s (scholium), app (appendix).

KANT

KdrV

Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974, [*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. P. Guyer & A. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.], cited according to the pagination of the Akademie Ausgabe

We had all the words of the world
And did not say
That which mattered
Since, there was only one word, one word that was missing:
Freedom!

Ahmad Shamloo, Iranian Poet, 1925-2000

Introduction: Hegel's Political Logic

Even Hegel's most abstract and metaphysical concepts are saturated with experience – experience of a world in which the unreasonable becomes reasonable. (Marcuse 1960: vii)

There is no single element or relation in Logic that cannot be ultimately referred back to elements and relations of the actual world, and does not ultimately have to be so referred. (Lukács *GLW* 13:504)

1- The Logic as Politics

My general aim in this dissertation is to demonstrate that Hegel's ontology in the *Science of Logic* – specifically in the second part of the *Science of Logic*, the logic of essence – expresses the general structure of social domination in capitalism. At first sight, the project of relating the logic¹ to capitalist society seems to be fundamentally misguided. The logic, says Hegel, is the realm of “metaphysics proper or purely speculative philosophy” (*WdL* I:16, *SL* 27). What does a text in metaphysics or purely speculative philosophy have to do with politics? The proof that Hegel's logic is already social and political, and for that reason, can be fruitfully appropriated for developing social and

¹ Throughout the dissertation, the term “logic” refers to Hegel's conception of logic, as expounded mainly in the *Science of Logic*, but also in the *Encyclopedia Logic*.

political philosophy cannot be made in the beginning. It is only through executing the project of relating logic to politics, that is, in the end of the dissertation, that the success or failure of the project can be judged. My aim in these brief introductory remarks is to indicate why this project is plausible and worthy to pursue, and to explain my motivation for undertaking it.

The first question that needs to be answered is, why in developing a Hegelian politics, I do not rely on the *Philosophy of Right*. Is not it the case that the *Philosophy of Right* is the locus of Hegel's social and political philosophy? To answer this question, we need to take into account the nature of Hegel's enterprise in the *Philosophy of Right*. The *Philosophy of Right* is arguably a text for *legitimation* and *justification* of bourgeois-capitalist social order, what Hegel (euphemistically) calls "modernity" [die Neuzeit]. In the Preface to the book, Hegel explicitly states that his aim is not to offer a *critical* theory, but rather an *affirmative* theory, which provides a rational ground for "reconciliation" of individuals with the modern social and political order². As the idea that Hegel's philosophy of right has an affirmative character is crucial for me in turning away from it, to preempt misunderstanding, I need to qualify my claim with two points: (1) In light of the recent scholarship on Hegel, it is evident that Hegel's motivation was not to give legitimacy to his contemporary Prussian state. Hegel was not primarily concerned with everyday politics; his aim was much broader. Namely, he attempted to give legitimacy to the basic structure of society in modernity, regardless of its immediate empirical

² "To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present, and thereby to delight in the present – this rational insight is the *reconciliation* with actuality which philosophy grants to those who have received the inner call to *comprehend*, to preserve their subjective freedom in the realm of the substantial, and at the same time to stand with their subjective freedom not in a particular and contingent situation, but in what has being in and for itself" (*GPR*, Vorrede S. 26-7, *PR* p.22).

manifestations. (2) That Hegel's social and political philosophy is affirmative does not at any rate imply that it does not have any critical potential. Hegel clearly thought that the basic structure of society in modernity was right and rational. This basic structure, which Hegel calls "the system of ethical world" [System der sittlichen Welt] (*GPR* §270) consists of the *fundamental* social and political institutions of modernity, which cohere with each other, and mutually support each other. While Hegel's stance towards the basic structure of society in modernity is affirmative, at the same time, he regards any significant perturbation of the normal status of the basic structure, or any excessive growth of one institution at the expense of others, as irrational and wrong, which, therefore, to that extent, would necessarily warrant criticism. To illustrate this point, let us consider a modern society, the contemporary society of the USA. Hegel's philosophy of right would certainly criticize the excessive atomization of bourgeois nuclear family (due to, say, the suburbanization of the social space); it would certainly criticize the excessive influence of financial corporations over the political process, as well as the excessive police brutality or the unjust penal code. Despite all these, Hegel's stance towards the basic structure of American society is undeniably affirmative. That is, within the framework of Hegel's philosophy of right, while it is necessary to criticize the excessive atomization of the bourgeois nuclear family, it is not possible to criticize the institution of bourgeois nuclear family as such. Likewise, it is not possible to criticize the capitalist economy as such, nor is it possible to criticize the institution of capitalist state as such.

Hegel lived in an era that was still infused with enthusiasm about the prospect of the bourgeois-capitalist social order. This enthusiasm, although tamed and not at any rate

romantic, entirely colors his social and political philosophy. However, the turn of the events since Hegel's death showed, I believe, that he was wrong.³ Most crucially, he significantly underestimated the scope of influence of economy in capitalism. To give only some examples out of the many, Hegel did not foresee the rapid proliferation of gated communities on the one hand, and of urban ghettos on the other. He did not foresee how the Earth under the rule of capital, to use the title of Mike Davis' book, would turn into a "planet of slums." He did not foresee how the loss of community through expansion of market economy could only be compensated either through virulent nationalism or religious fundamentalism. It is true that Hegel, having a great sense of reality, clearly diagnosed some major problems arising from the function of market economy. Yet, he thought these problems are marginal, and do not significantly affect the rationality of the basic structure of society, or else, he thought that these problems, although important, can be successfully tamed and contained through the intervention of the modern state. Contrary to Hegel, it is almost self-evident now that the rule of capital is not only restricted to economy. Rather, in capitalism, capital, to use Marx's, is "a general illumination, which bathes all the other colors and modifies their particularity; it is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being." (*MEW* 42:40, *G* 107) It must be conceded that in light of the all-pervasiveness of the power of capital over virtually all aspects of life in capitalism, the project of the *Philosophy of Right*, which aims at proving the rationality of the bourgeois-capitalist system, essentially fails.

³ Towards the end of his life in 1831 Hegel himself takes a more sober position on the basic structure of society in modernity, and regards the issue of realization of freedom of individuals in the modern state to be "the knot, the problem...with which history is now occupied, and whose solution it has to yet work out in the future." (*WW* 12:536, S, *LPH*: 472)

Thus, one cannot ground a genuinely critical theory of society in capitalism – a critical theory that does not, self-complacently, aim at some piecemeal marginal reforms such that the status quo be preserved, but aims at a real change of the status quo – on the basis of the *Philosophy of Right*.⁴ This, however, does not mean that Hegel cannot offer a genuinely critical theory of capitalism. He does have such a theory; yet its locus is not in his official social and political philosophy. Rather, as I will show in this dissertation, the locus of Hegel’s critical theory of capitalism is his *Science of Logic*. As I hope this dissertation will demonstrate, the logic has a great critical potential that far transcends Hegel’s own official appraisal of the modern social order, a great critical potential that is as yet not fully explored, let alone exploited. Once Antonio Negri wrote, “Spinoza’s true politics is his metaphysics” (1991:114). Similarly, my aim is to show, Hegel’s true politics is his logic.

In undertaking a project of developing critical theory of society on the basis of the logic, I deliberately depart from the general trend of scholarship on Hegel’s social and political philosophy, especially the scholarship that is done in the Anglophone world. Perhaps under the wide influence of John Rawls, who thought the question of metaphysics is totally irrelevant to the question of politics, the recent scholarship on Hegel has tried to disentangle Hegel’s social and political philosophy from its support in the logic. To give some prominent examples: Axel Honneth, who bases his “normative reconstruction” of Hegel’s social thought on the *Philosophy of Right*, explicitly states that in “our post metaphysical standards of rationality” appealing to the logic in the context of

⁴ Or if a genuinely critical theory of society in capitalism on the basis of the *Philosophy of Right* is possible, it can only be achieved through great interpretive violence. See, for example, (Ruda: 2011)

practical philosophy is not allowed (2010:5). Honneth's reading of Hegel, as he himself avers, "does not depend on *any* argumentative backing by his logic" (ibid:48, my emphasis). Similarly, Allen Wood in the introduction of his now classic book on Hegel's philosophy of right programmatically announces, "speculative logic is dead; but Hegel's thought is not" (1990:4-8). More modestly, Frederick Neuhouser in his acclaimed book on Hegel's social and political philosophy intentionally ignores the logic through and through (2000). Similar positions are taken by Allen Patten (2002) and Michael Hardimon (2004).

However, despite the current academic interpretation of Hegel, there is a long tradition of using the logic for developing critical social theory, a tradition that goes back to Marx. In his youth, Marx offered a devastating critique of the affirmative character of Hegel's philosophy of right, yet he remained fascinated with Hegel's dialectical logic throughout his life. It is worthwhile to emphasize that the view that Marx was grappling with Hegel in his "philosophical" youth, and then abandoned Hegel in his later "scientific" or "economic" phase is simply mistaken. While working on his economic theory in 1858, Marx wrote to Engels that the logic had greatly helped him to solve a seemingly technical problem in economics:

I am, by the way, discovering some nice arguments. e.g. I have completely demolished the theory of profit as hitherto propounded. What was of great use to me as regards method of treatment was Hegel's *Logic* at which I had taken another look by mere accident.... If ever the time comes when such work is again possible, I should very much like to write 2 or 3 sheets making accessible to the common reader the *rational* aspect of the method which Hegel not only discovered but also mystified. (MEW 29:260, MECW 40:249)

Similarly, in his 1873 postface to *Capital*, despite the fact that Hegel was not fashionable at the time, Marx does not hesitate to “openly avow [him]self as the pupil of that mighty thinker [i.e. Hegel]”. Then, he continues:

The mystification which the dialectic suffers in Hegel’s hands by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general forms of motion in a comprehensive and conscious manner....In its mystified form, the dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and glorify what exists. In its rational form it is a scandal and an abomination to the bourgeoisie and its doctrinaire spokesmen, because it includes in its positive understanding of what exists a simultaneous recognition of its negation, its inevitable destruction; because it regards every historically developed form as being in a fluid state, in motion, and therefore grasps its transient aspect as well; and because *it does not let itself be impressed by anything, being in its very essence critical and revolutionary*. (MEW 23: C I:103, my emphasis)

The attention to Hegel’s logic continued in the Marxist tradition after Marx. In the immediate succession to Marx, Engels wrote a book, *Anti-Dühring*, which was greatly influenced by the logic. (Although, unfortunately, as Engels’ aim was to popularize the dialectical logic, he oversimplified Hegel, an over-simplification that proved later to be more harmful, rather than helpful, to the reception of Hegel). We can also refer to the case of Lenin. With the emergence of the First World War, he was encountered with a political impasse: instead of supporting a class-based cause, the members of the Second International overtly took nationalist positions. In what now in the era of professionalization of politics seems to be absolutely crazy, Lenin’s strategy to encounter this political impasse was to seclude himself in the library of Bern for eight months to do a close study of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*. Similarly, it was arguably Hegel’s logic that helped Lukács to develop his revolutionary theory in the *History and Class*

Consciousness. The logic, although with a different interpretation, remained pivotal to Lukács' later project of developing an elaborate *Ontology of Social Being*. In case of Adorno, multiple courses of lectures on sociology and sociological philosophy as well as the *Negative Dialectics* clearly demonstrate the centrality of discussion with Hegel's logic to his critical theory of society in capitalism.

The Hegelian-Marxist tradition amply used the logic to explain society and politics in capitalism. The question is now, whether Hegel himself would endorse developing a social and political philosophy on the basis of the logic. We learned above that the current academic scholarship on Hegel, for the most part, endeavors to dissociate the question of the logic from the question of politics⁵. However, there is textually no doubt that Hegel himself regarded his social and political philosophy to presuppose the logic. Not only in the Introduction to the *Philosophy of Right*, he explicitly states that the philosophical foundation of the book must be found in the logic (*GPR* §2, §6, §31), but also at some crucial stages of the book, he makes his argument mainly through appealing to the logic (*GPR* §141, §272, §280).⁶ In this dissertation, I will not explore how logic is being used in the *Philosophy of Right*. My aim is rather to develop a radical critical social theory on the basis of the logic of essence, a critical theory that will far surpasses Hegel's own understanding of society in modernity, as explicated in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Hegel, thus, openly accepts that the logic is the foundation of politics, but what about the reverse claim? Namely, can one say that, for Hegel, logic is also influenced by

⁵ There are, however, a few recent attempts to revive the interpretation of the *Philosophy of Right* on the basis of the logic. See especially (Goodfield: 2014).

⁶ The issues that Hegel directly appeals to the logic to argue for his political conception include, among others, the transition from morality to the ethical life (§141), the critique of liberal conception of division of powers in the modern state (§272), and the nature of sovereignty in the modern state (§280).

politics? In this dissertation, I will elaborately argue that Hegel's logic reflects the structure of society in capitalism. This implies that Hegel's logic is already political. That is to say, Hegel in the logic does not offer a transhistorical ontology, which applies to all periods of history, but a historically specific ontology, an ontology that captures the structure of society in capitalism. The claim that the logic is historical and political might seem at first sight to be at odds with Hegel's own self-understanding of the logic.⁷ Yet, I would suggest that this claim *could* be defended even textually. In the Introduction to the book, Hegel compares logic to the grammar of a language. The grammar, of course, cannot exist independently of the language whose grammar it is, yet it is possible to extract the rules of grammar, and express them in an abstract and systematic manner. Hegel compares one who begins to learn a language, and one who knows the language well as follows:

He who begins the study of grammar finds in its forms and laws dry abstractions, arbitrary rules, in general an isolated collection of definitions and terms which exhibit only the value and significance of what is implied in their immediate

⁷ Especially, the following passage has been usually read as if Hegel were offering a purely apriori logic, one that can be dissociated from history, and from the empirical world in general: "Logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth as it is without veil and in its own absolute nature. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence, before the creation of nature and a finite mind" (*WdL* I: 44, *SL* 50). However, even this passage can be read in such a way that accommodates the historicity of the logic. Arguably, for Hegel, eternity does not exclude historicity. The logic is historical, insofar as it grasps the categories, which express the essential structure of society in a specific historical period, namely, modernity. The logic is at the same time eternal, insofar it develops those categories immanently, and without any reference to the social and historical world. This simultaneous historicity and eternity is not peculiar to Hegel's logic; it is characteristic of all great philosophical (and for that matter, artistic) works. Take the example of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We can say that the *Critique* is historical, insofar as it presupposes a specific theory of physics in the history of science, i.e. Newton's mechanics. Yet, at the same time, the *Critique* can rightfully be considered as eternal, insofar as its essential argument is independent of Newton's mechanics, such that if the latter would scientifically be discredited, the *Critique* would still hold its philosophical value.

meaning; there is nothing to be known in them other than themselves. On the other hand, he who has mastered a language and at the same time has a comparative knowledge of other languages, he alone can make contact with the spirit and culture of a people through the grammar of its language; the same rules and forms now have a substantial, living value [erfüllten, lebendigen Wert]. Through the grammar, he can recognize *the expression of spirit as such, that is, logic* [*Ausdruck des Geistes überhaupt, die Logik*]. (WdL I: 53, SL: 57, my emphasis)

The grammar of a language obviously co-evolves with the language itself. It is not the case that, *first*, there is a grammar, which *then* gets embodied in the language. Similarly, logic does not precede history, but develops as history develops. Interestingly, for Hegel, it is the abstract grammar of the language, rather than the lexicon or the semantics that expresses the inner life of the language. Similarly, I will show that it is the logic, rather than Hegel's political philosophy, that expresses the spirit of capitalism.⁸ Hegel himself in the Preface to the second edition, which he drafts the year of his death (1831), describes his project in the logic as the "reconstruction" [Rekonstruktion] of the empirical world, the empirical world which is obtained through history (WdL I:30, SL 39) (Cf. Pinkard 2002:250). Finally, the analogy of grammar and logic could be pushed further: There are different languages, and therefore different grammars. Correspondingly, there are different historical periods, and therefore different logics that express those historical periods. This could be read as a further ground how logic can be read historically, and not from the point of view of a transcendent god.

Of course, the analogy between logic and the grammar, on its own, is not compelling as to prove that the logic is historical. However, no matter what Hegel's own

⁸ It is worthwhile to refer again to Negri who asserts, "it is only in the complexity of metaphysics that the modern age can be read." (ibid: xix)

self-understanding of the logic is, my argument about historicity of the logic holds nonetheless. No direct argument in this case is possible. Rather, it is by *showing* that the major categories of the logic of essence correspond to the major categories that grasp the essential structure of capitalism that I argue for my thesis, namely, the thesis that the logic is not a free-floating logic, but it is the logic *of* a historically specific period, i.e. capitalism.

In closing this section, I would like to emphasize that in arguing that there is a close link between logic and the structure of society in capitalism, I am following the general materialist thesis, according to which ideas are not simply autonomous, but they are dependent on the social context in which they arise. To use Adorno's phrase, the seemingly abstract ideas have an "experiential content" [Erfahrungsgehalt]. Marcuse and Lukács also express the same point explicitly (See the two quotes in the beginning of this introduction.). Locating myself in this tradition of critical social theory, my project is exactly to make the "experiential content" of the logic explicit.

2- The General Aims and Method

The central concept of the dissertation is the concept of "power" [Macht]. Hegel is usually considered to be the philosopher of freedom, not the philosopher of power. However, upon a close reading of the *Science of Logic*, one realizes that the concept of power plays a pivotal role in Hegel's ontology. It is true that Hegel does not use the concept of power frequently, yet when he does, he uses it quite decisively. The importance of power for Hegel is especially manifest in his discussion of "substance". For Hegel, substance is the highest category of the logic of essence, and of objective

logic. Substance, therefore, is the most determinate ontological category for Hegel, and regressively provides the bedrock for all other categories. Importantly, both in the *Science of Logic* and in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel conceives of substance as “absolute power” [absolute Macht]. I read the concept of power backwards in the logic of essence, and show how the development of the categories of essence is best understood in terms of the development of the concept of power.

In focusing on power as an ontological category, I specifically have two distinct, yet closely interrelated, aims: (1) I will show that Hegel’s ontology in the logic of essence is ontology of power. In its most general sense, this means that power is constitutive of the structure of individuals. That is, individuals are what they are only in and through the relation of power that obtains between them. (2) I will show that Hegel’s ontology of power in the logic of essence specifically captures the structure of social domination in capitalism. In order to do this, I substantially use Marx’s mature critique of political economy in his London period as well as Adorno’s later social theory.

In studying Hegel and Marx together, I do not simply *compare* them with each other. Rather, I offer a Marxist interpretation of Hegel’s logic, *and* a Hegelian interpretation of Marx. As this approach might seem to be confusing from a scholarly point of view, I would like to clarify it with two points: (1) The main focus of the dissertation is Hegel’s logic. Although a significant portion of the dissertation is on Marx and on Adorno, this does not mean, at any rate, that I am trying to *force* a Marxist interpretation on Hegel. Rather, my methodological principle is to analyze Hegel’s text closely, and to make explicit only what is already implicit in Hegel’s own text. I believe through a close and careful analysis of Hegel’s logic, new insights about the nature of

capitalism can be garnered, new insights that a merely cursory work with the text cannot afford. (2) However, although I mainly focus on Hegel, this does not mean that I use Marx and Adorno only as mere ancillaries to Hegel. Even judged by the standards of Hegel's own writing, the *Science of Logic* is quite an impenetrable and hermetic text. One can easily get trapped into the language of Hegel, and reproduce a similarly impenetrable and hermetic commentary on Hegel in another level. Adopting a specifically Marxist *perspective* allows me to unravel Hegel's complex text in a way that a just close study of Hegel's logic cannot do. Thus, Marx's work is not a mere ancillary for Hegel for me, but frames my entire interpretation of Hegel. Finally, I admit that there is a real tension between the two methodological principles – the two principles being reading Hegel on his own terms, and reading Hegel in light of Marx – but I believe the tension, rather than being constraining, is indeed productive.

3- The Bases of Interpretation

There are some essential themes that underlie my interpretation of Hegel, and of Marx. These themes recur throughout the dissertation, and in each chapter I address them from a different perspective. In this section, my aim is to give an initial exposition of these themes. The proper grounding of them will be achieved through the dissertation in its entirety. In the following, I begin first with the exposition of the essential themes of Hegel (3-1), and then continue to address those of Marx (3-2).

3-1- The Bases of Interpretation of Hegel

Let me begin first by outlining the structure of the *Science of Logic*:

Volume One: The objective logic

Book One: The doctrine of being

Book Two: The doctrine of essence

Volume Two: The subjective logic or the doctrine of the Concept

As we see, the *Science of Logic* is divided into two major volumes: the objective logic, and the subjective logic. The objective logic is itself divided into two parts: the doctrine of being (or simply the logic of being), and the doctrine of essence (or the logic of essence). The dissertation is about the logic of essence. For methodological reasons that become clear later in the dissertation, I entirely ignore the subjective logic or the logic of Concept (except for a brief discussion in the Conclusion.) Furthermore, I will deal with the logic of being only marginally; namely, only insofar as it is necessary for understanding the logic of essence.

Hegel presents his ontology in the objective logic. The task of the objective logic is, in general, to reconstruct the structure of things or individuals.⁹ This reconstruction occurs in two ways: (1) In the logic of being, Hegel reconstructs the logical structure of individuals as they are in their immediate being, i.e. as they appear to us in our everyday pre-critical consciousness. Thus, in the logic of being, Hegel discusses the category of “something” [Etwas], and such categories as “quality”, “quantity”, and “measure” that “something” harbors. (2) In the logic of essence, Hegel develops categories with which to grasp the *essential* structure of individuals, the essential structure that is not immediately

⁹ As Hegel states in the Introduction to the book, “the objective logic, then, takes the place rather of the former *metaphysics* which was intended to be the scientific construction of the world in terms of *thoughts* alone. If we have regard to the final shape of this science, then it is first and immediately *ontology* whose place is taken by objective logic – that part of this metaphysics which was supposed to investigate the nature of *ens* in general.” (*WdL* I:61, *SL* 63)

accessible to us. The categories of the logic of essence include, among others, cause and effect, ground and grounded, inner and outer, force and expression, and substance and accident.

For Hegel the task of the logic of being is primarily *critical*; Hegel demonstrates that the common-sense ontology is not able to adequately determine the structure of individuals. Importantly, Hegel's critique of the logic of being is not simply a critique of the *categories* of being, but more fundamentally, the critique of the way, according to which the logic of being operates; it is thus primarily the critique of the *logic* of being. For Hegel, essence is not merely a further continuation of, and a further elaboration on the categories of being. Rather, the transition from being to essence is a total *paradigm shift*; it is a shift from the *logic* of being to a fundamentally different mode of *logic*, the *logic* of essence.

In the following, I lay out the main bases of my interpretation of the logic of essence, in contrast to those of the logic of being. I need to mention that Hegel does not explicitly characterize the logic of essence and the logic of being in the following way; yet these points, as I will show in detail the dissertation, underlie his conception of being and essence.

3-1-1- The Logic of Being as the Logic of the Relation of Gleichgültigkeit

One particularly illuminating way to look at the objective logic is to grasp how Hegel understands the *relations* between individuals or categories (Cf. *EnzL* §240). Let me begin with the logic of being. In the logic of being the major form of relation between individuals is the relation of Gleichgültigkeit. The main meaning of Gleichgültigkeit is

“indifference”. Hegel exploits the meaning of *Gleichgültigkeit* to explain the logical relation between individuals. (Recall that individuals in the logic of being are grasped with the category of “something”.) In the logic of being, individuals are “indifferent” towards one another; since the relation between them is not constitutive of them. Namely, individuals are “self-subsistent” on their own, independently of the relation that obtains between them. This is not to say that individuals in the logic of being do not have any relation with each other; they indeed do. Yet, the relation is “external” to individuals. They have, so to speak, a non-relational core, to which the relation between them is *subsequently* added. It is important to emphasize that, for Hegel, the relation of *Gleichgültigkeit* has one further meaning: since the individuals have a core independently of each other, they are, to that extent, *equal* with each other. The relation between them, therefore, is the *symmetrical* relation of *equality*. The one determines the other to the same extent that the other determines the one. One other way to say the same thing is this: the relation of equality is “equally valid” [*gleich gelten*] for them. (In this dissertation, I translate *Gleichgültigkeit* mostly as equality. By equality here I mean a kind of equality that obtains through indifference of individuals towards one another.)

3-1-2- The Logic of Essence as the Logic of the Relation of Domination [*Herrschaft*]

The minimal condition of a relation to be called a relation of power¹⁰ is *asymmetry*. From the logical point of view, the two individuals that are in the relation of power or domination determine one another asymmetrically; the one that is dominating determines the one that is dominated. As I indicated above, in the logic of being the individuals,

¹⁰ I use the terms power and domination interchangeably.

through their indifference, determine each other equally. This implies that the relation between individuals in the logic of being is symmetrical, that is, devoid of power. In contrast, Hegel argues that the *essential* structure of world is constitutively defined through power. Thus, the categories of the logic of essence are constitutively the categories of power. It must be noted that the structure of power in the logic of essence is of special type: it is not a one-way relationship of the dominating over the dominated; rather, it is a two-way relationship with a specific structure, a specific structure that Hegel calls “reflective.” In order to understand the “reflective” structure of power in essence, consider the relation between two categories of the logic of essence: “essence” and “appearance”. The relation between the two can be formulated in the following way: (1) Essence determines appearance. (2) However, appearance is not a mere ancillary to essence. Rather, appearance also reflects back on essence, and forces essence to constitute (and reconstitute) itself as essence. (3) Although essence and appearance codetermine each other, it is *ultimately* essence that has the privileged status, and determines appearance: appearance remains *ultimately* the appearance *of* essence. Thus, there is an *asymmetrical* relation of power between essence and appearance, the relation of power that can be expressed as follows: (1') Essence dominates appearance; (2') yet, it incorporates within itself a moment of appearance dominating essence; (3') And *ultimately*, it is essence that dominates appearance. The said structure of power recurs throughout the logic of essence, and forms the *modus operandi* of essence: such asymmetry, which incorporates a moment of symmetry within its structure, obtains between cause and effect, inner and outer, force and expression, and substance and

accident.¹¹

3-1-3- The Logic of Essence as the Ontology of Absolute Relationality

In the logic of being, things or individuals have primacy over relations that obtain between them. Individuals are *first* defined pre-relationally, and *then* are related to each other. By contrast, in the logic of essence, relations have primacy over individuals. That is to say, in the logic of essence, individuals are *derived* from the relations that obtain between them. It is important to emphasize that for Hegel relations have *absolute* priority over individuals: namely, individuals are *solely, exclusively* derived from relations that obtain between them. Hegel insists,

In the sphere of being, relatedness is only *in itself*, by contrast, in essence it is posited. This is then in general the difference between the forms of being and those of essence. In being, everything is immediate; in essence, by contrast, everything is relational. [Im Sein ist alles unmittelbar, im Wesen dagegen ist alles relativ.] (*EnzL*. §111Z)

Thus, Hegel's ontology in the logic of essence is "ontology of absolute relationality."¹²

By proposing the ontology of absolute relationality Hegel makes a radical break from the traditional ontology, from what he himself calls "the *metaphysics of the past*" [die *vormalige Metaphysik*] (*EnzL* §27). The traditional ontology is inspired by Aristotle's ontology. For Aristotle, individuals are primarily defined through their "substance".

¹¹ The theses that the logic of being is the logic of the relation of Gleichgültigkeit and that the logic of essence is the logic of the relation of Herrschaft is first addressed by Michael Theunissen (1978). See Section 6 of this Introduction for a more detailed discussion of Theunissen's work.

¹² The theses of absolute relationality of essence is defended through a close commentary of the beginning of the logic of essence by Christian Iber in his *Metaphysik absoluter Relationalität: eine Studie zu den beiden ersten Kapiteln von Hegels Wesenslogik* (1990).

Substance in Aristotle's *Categories* is a *pre-relational* "substratum" which lies underneath qualities and properties. This conception of substance, in one way or another, was adopted by medieval philosophers, as well as by modern philosophers as diverse as Descartes, Spinoza, and Locke. Hegel's ontology is radically different. Whereas the traditional ontology is primarily *ontology of things*, Hegel's ontology is *ontology of relations*. (I need to emphasize that although it is true that for Hegel "substance" is still the highest ontological category, nonetheless, Hegel's conception of substance is radically different from that of traditional ontology. Namely, Hegel's substance is not a "thing," but solely obtains through the process of relationality, as I will explain later.)

3-2- The Bases of Interpretation of Marx

According to Marx, capitalism is not a further continuation, or some modification of previous societies, but it has a *fundamentally* different structure. Thus, the social ontology that underpins Marx's analysis of capitalism is not transhistorical; it is rather a social ontology that is historically specific to capitalism. In this section, I briefly lay out two main features of the structure of society in capitalism that are important for my dissertation, the first is concerned with the absolute relationality of society in capitalism (3-2-1), and the second is concerned with the nature of power in capitalism (3-2-2).

3-2-1- The Ontology of Absolute Relationality in Capitalism

I argue that the structure of society in capitalism, according to Marx, is absolutely relational. The principle that makes society absolutely relational in capitalism is the relation of "exchange" [Austausch] of commodities. However, what makes capitalism, in

contradistinction with previous societies, a system of absolute relationality is not the mere presence of exchange of commodities. Rather, the absolute relationality in capitalism obtains through *universalization* of the relation of exchange. In those pre-capitalist societies, where there was some sort of exchange of commodities, exchange remained a marginal phenomenon. The products were produced primarily for individual consumption, and only the *excess* or the *surplus* would get exchanged. By contrast, in capitalism, where the relation of exchange has become universal, the products of labor are produced *primarily* for exchange. That is to say, in pre-capitalist societies, the products of labor are not relationally (that is, in relation to other products of labor) defined. They become relational only *ex post facto*, only if they get exchanged. By contrast, in capitalism, where a system of absolute relationality is formed, commodities are *ex ante* relationally defined; they become what they are only through relation with other commodities.

3-2-2- Domination in Capitalism Requires Equality

In societies based on slavery, there was no equality between masters and slaves. Likewise, in feudal societies, there was no equality between lords and serfs. Social equality is a distinct achievement of capitalist societies. Yet, the fact that individuals are equal with each other in capitalism does not imply at any rate that there is no domination. Quite to the contrary: Domination in capitalism exists, and indeed *requires* equality. In other words, in capitalism, the relation of domination of capitalists over workers does not occur *despite* the relation of equality between them, but precisely *through* their equality.

3-2-3- The Impersonal and Abstract Character of Power in Capitalism

In feudal societies, and societies based on slavery, the relation of domination was *direct* and *personal*. Slaves or serfs were bound to particular masters, or particular serfs. In contrast, in capitalism, the worker is not bound to any particular capitalist. A worker is able, or should be ideally able, to change the capitalist for whom he works. Yet, despite this change, he remains dominated all the same. This is because the mode of domination in capitalism is *impersonal* and *anonymous*. In Marx's phrase, in capitalism individuals "are ruled by *abstractions* [*Abstraktionen*]" (MEW 42:97, G 164, original emphasis). Furthermore, I argue that the *ground-level* mode of domination in capitalism is not the domination of workers by capitalists, but by the domination of *all* individuals, i.e. *both* capitalists *and* workers by the *totality* of capital.

4- The Summary of Chapters

In this section, I will give a fairly elaborate summary of the chapters. The summary is not exhaustive of the content of the dissertation, and in the interest of space, I have to ignore many important discussions. Furthermore, I would like to emphasize that the chapters, although relatively independent from each other, are not self-standing on their own. Rather, each chapter presupposes all the other ones. The argument of the dissertation is one single argument, different aspects of which are discussed in different chapters.¹³

¹³ I do not provide any reference in the abstract. All the claims made in the summary, without exception, have references in the text of the dissertation.

Part I – The Logic of Illusion [Schein]

Chapter 1 – Illusion [Schein] as Ideology

We have learned that the logic of being describes the structure of individuals as they immediately appear to us, and that the logic of essence describes the essential structure of individuals. The question is now, how the surface appearance is related to the essential structure. Hegel uses the category of Schein to explicate such surface appearance. I will argue that Schein for Hegel is a *false* appearance that conceals the truth of essence. Accordingly, I translate Schein, dependent on context, as “semblance” or “illusion”. The surface appearance is an illusion, since, if it is considered on its own and independently of its relation to essence, it cannot but be misleading about the truth of essence. However, although semblance for Hegel is false, it is not a *mere* error that can be discarded away, but it is constitutive of essence. Hegel thus argues, firstly, that essence and semblance are so interpenetrated that it is not possible to have one without the other, and secondly and more determinately, that essence “posits” or generates semblance as essence’s own requirement, i.e. as essence’s own “presupposition”. The relation of essence to semblance is therefore a relation of power. Semblance does not exist on its own, but *solely* functions as a moment of essence that determines it.

I argue that Hegel’s logic of semblance captures the structure of ideology, specifically, of the ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism. Adorno defines ideology as a “socially necessary illusion [Schein]”. Ideology is “socially necessary” in the sense that it does not depend on the subjective attitude of people, but it is constitutively embodied within legal, social and political institutions of capitalism. Ideology is a “necessary illusion” in the sense, firstly, that it cannot be rooted out through

enlightened reasoning, and secondly, that it is an illusion, by means of which the domination of capitalism obtains – capitalism cannot possibly function without ideology.

Marx's mature economic theory provides a precise explanation, as to how equality and freedom work as ideology in capitalism. According to Marx, capitalism is necessarily a market economy. The institution of market presupposes free and equal individuals that enter into an equal and non-coercive relation of contract with each other. Thus, equality and freedom are necessary and objective in capitalism. However, equality and freedom in capitalism, according to Marx, are at the same time "illusion" [Schein]. Marx emphasizes that the market, or in his own language the sphere of "circulation", is a "pure semblance" [reiner Schein]; the agents involved in market transactions do not immediately see what lies behind the market, namely, the process of "production". Yet, it is exactly the sphere of production that defines the essence of capitalism, since it is in the sphere of production that surplus value is created. In contrast to the market, which embodies equality and freedom of individuals, the sphere of production is characterized by domination and inequality. The sphere of production is the sphere of domination of capitalists over workers, since the production process is entirely determined and organized by capitalists. The sphere of production is the sphere of inequality, since the workers are not compensated for the amount of value that they produce; the surplus-value created is systematically transferred to the capitalists. Finally, it needs to be emphasized that, according to Marx, although the institution of market is an illusion, it is a necessary illusion. The value created in the sphere of production loses its entire value, if it cannot be sold through the market. Domination in capitalism, therefore, does not obtain in spite of equality and freedom, but necessarily requires it.

Part II – The Logic of Opposition

Chapter 2 – Opposition as the Basic Relation of Power

In the second chapter, I argue that the most fundamental form of relation that obtains between individuals is the relation of opposition [Gegensatz], and that the relation of opposition, in its adequate form, is a relation of domination. These two claims together establish that Hegel's ontology is ontology of power. This implies that for Hegel, I argue, individuals are not separable from the relation of power. Rather, they are constituted through the relation of power.

For Hegel, the relation of opposition obtains between the categories of the “positive” and the “negative”, between, say, +A and –A.¹⁴ I will show that, for Hegel, the positive and the negative are *solely* derived from the relation of opposition that obtains between them. Each of the positive and the negative *excludes* its other, yet at the same time achieves its own identity entirely through the relation to its other. Although the positive and the negative are solely defined relationally, this does not mean that they are simply exchangeable. Rather, I will argue, the positive, for Hegel, is primarily a *self-centered* individual that only subordinately relates to the negative in order to secure its identity; while the negative is primarily a *de-centered* individual, which achieves its identity primarily through relation to the positive. The relation between the positive and the negative is, therefore, asymmetrical, and thus, a relation of power. That is to say, although the positive and negative codetermine each other, the positive enjoys the privileged status, to which the negative must refer to.

¹⁴ To preempt misunderstanding, I should emphasize the “positive” in this context should not be confused with the mere given, as the phrase “positivist” social sciences has it. There is not such givenness in the logic of essence. Positive and negative are both relational terms.

The relation of opposition must be contrasted with the relation of “diversity” [Verschiedenheit]. In diversity, an individual is related to any *arbitrary* other (A is related to B, C, D, etc.). In contrast, in opposition, each individual relates to *its own* personal and singular other (A is related to –A). I will discuss how for Hegel opposition is more determinate than diversity, and that therefore diversity always presupposes opposition as its ground. In our everyday life, we tend to conceive of individuals as “diverse”, each as self-subsistent on its own, and as simply different from others. Such diversity, however, is an “illusion” [Schein], a constitutive “illusion”, which masks the deeper relation of opposition.

I will, then, discuss how Marx’s conception of the opposition between capital and labor, at the logical level, accords with Hegel’s conception of opposition. According to Marx, value is *solely* created by labor. Simply owning the means of production does not create *any* value. Capitalism is based on private ownership of means of production, and the means of production is owned by capital. Consequently, the value created by labor, upon its very moment of production, belongs to capital. Labor, therefore, *constitutes* capital, which at the same time *excludes* it from itself. That is to say, labor is the “negative” that primarily exists not for itself, but for capital, which functions as the “positive” of the relation. I argue that the seeming plurality of the relation of capital and labor in various economic settings in capitalism – say, in Sweden, in China, or in the United States – is an “illusion” which hides the essential nature of the relation of capital and labor, the essential nature that is defined in terms of opposition and domination.

Finally, in an excursus, I demonstrate how Catharine MacKinnon’s conception of gender formation accords to Hegel’s logical conception of opposition – and this is the

case, although she does not refer to Hegel at all. For MacKinnon, the relation of domination does not obtain between otherwise independently existing male and female, but the very categories of male and female are constituted through the relation of domination of male over female. That is to say, for MacKinnon there is no “stratum of human commonality” underneath men and women; rather, such supposedly human-commonality is simply “the male standard.” Translated into Hegel’s language, for MacKinnon, male functions as the “positive”, to which female as the “negative” must necessarily relate in order to define itself as female.

Part III – The Logic of Totality

I have indicated above that there is a major paradigm shift from the logic of being to the logic of essence. I have discussed this paradigm shift along two axes: firstly, from the primacy of individuals over relations in the logic of being to the primacy of relations over individuals in the logic of essence, and secondly, from the relation of equality in the logic of being to the relation of domination in the logic of essence. This paradigm shift also can be explained through the conception of totality.¹⁵ The logic of being begins with individuals, and cannot determine the structure of individuals adequately, precisely because it cannot determine the structure of totality adequately. In contrast, for Hegel, essence is a totality; and the development of the categories of essence (in part 2 and 3 of the logic of essence) is in effect the development of the concept of totality. Whereas the logic of being the primacy is with individuals, in the logic of essence the primacy is with totality. It is worthwhile to emphasize that the two themes discussed above get united in

¹⁵ I use the terms “totality” and “whole” interchangeably.

Hegel's conception of totality of essence: firstly, totality results solely through the process of relationality between individuals, and secondly, totality is defined as "absolute power" [absolute Macht]. Given the central significance of totality in Hegel's logic of essence, I discuss the concept of totality in three long chapters: In Chapter 3, I reconstruct part 2 and 3 of the logic of essence on the basis of the concept of totality. I also show the social significance of Hegel's conception of totality through motivating and elaborating on Adorno's conception of the totality of society in capitalism. In Chapter 4, I elaborate on Marx's conception of the totality of capital in capitalism, and demonstrate how it closely accords to Hegel's conception of totality in the logic of essence. In Chapter 5, I discuss the modality of the power of totality, and explain how the power of totality over individuals is "necessary" both in the logic of essence, and in Marx's conception of capitalism. I also argue how the freedom of individuals in capitalism is the freedom that obtains through "contingency." Together these chapters give a coherent view of totality of essence for Hegel, and how it expresses the structure of capitalism.¹⁶

Chapter 3 – Totality as Absolute Power

The relation of power between two opposing individuals is unsustainable by itself. Rather, it must occur in a context, in a "totality" which supports this relationship. The task of this chapter is to carve out the exact structure of totality in the logic of essence. I begin my discussion of Hegel in this chapter by correcting two common misconceptions of Hegel's totality, which are also articulated by Karl Popper: (1) Firstly, I argue that

¹⁶ In the interest of space, in this summary, I entirely ignore my discussion of Adorno in Chapter 3, and my discussion of analytical Marxism in Chapter 4.

Hegel's conception of totality is not the sum-total of all realities. By simply adding up, say, all the historical facts about the French Revolution, we won't have at any rate the conception of the totality of the French Revolution. (2) Secondly, I argue that Hegel's holism is not a part/whole holism. In part/whole holism, the parts are conceived as self-standing, namely, as independent from each other, and the whole is conceived as a mere composition of the parts. Hegel argues that such conception of totality is only adequate for "mechanical" wholes, such as a table or a watch, which he designates as "untrue" wholes.

The true wholes for Hegel are organic wholes, not mechanical wholes. Hegel develops his organic conception of whole in the third and final chapter of the logic of essence. There, Hegel identifies true totality with the category of "actuality" [Wirklichkeit]. Actuality is not the sum-total of all individuals, but it is the *structure* that organizes individuals in relation to one another; it is an organization that gives "form" to the totality. Importantly, actuality for Hegel is not an "inner" that may or may not be "externalized." Actuality is not an "inert" structure that lies underneath the phenomenon. Rather, Hegel's actuality, quite like Aristotle's actuality [energeia], is active, and exists *within* the phenomenon. Hegel thus defines actuality as the "self-moving of form" [Sichbewegen der Form], as "activation of what really matters" [Betätigung der Sache] in the phenomenon. I argue that for Hegel such form-giving activity is an *effective power*, which preserves the identity of totality amidst its changing states. For Hegel, actuality has the power to produce and reproduce itself. This means that actuality is in effect "the cause of itself"; it is *sui generis*. The fact that in actuality the cause and effect, the determining and the determined, are one and the same implies that actuality has a self-

referential nature. The selfhood of actuality, however, is not a full-fledged selfhood, a full-fledged selfhood that is defined by freedom, but it is a self whose structure is determined through “blind necessity.”

The most determinate form of actuality, and thus the most determinate form of totality for Hegel in the logic of essence, is “substance”. In contrast to the relation of substance and modes in Spinoza, the relation of substance and accidents (or individuals) in Hegel is “reflective.” Accidents, of course, are dependent upon substance, but substance is also dependent on and constituted by accidents. Nonetheless, although substance is constituted by accidents, it retains *contradictorily* an independent status, which is able to produce or “posit” accidents as its own requirement, i.e., as its own “presupposition”. The ontology of absolute relationality gets its full articulation in the conception of substance, since substance is the identity of totality *solely* achieved through the processuality of the relation between substance and accidents.

It is now, in the maximally complex category of the logic of essence, i.e. in the category of substance, that Hegel explicitly and profusely uses the language of power. Indeed, Hegel outright identifies substance with “absolute power” [absolute Macht]. The totality of substance exerts a rich array of causal powers on individuals that constitute it. According to Hegel, substance has “creative” power over individuals, insofar as it causes them to come to be. It has at the same time “destructive” power over them, insofar as it causes them to cease to be, thereby substituting them with other individuals. Individuals might have the “illusion” [Schein] that they have power over one another, yet such power, in truth, is the power of substance, which “posits an unequal value” for the individuals. As the power of substance is constitutive of individuals, in the normal course of affairs, it

is not visible to individuals. It becomes visible, though, when individuals endeavor to trespass the boundaries of the space for possible actions that substance has set for them. In such cases, the power of substance becomes manifest “violence” [Gewalt], which is able to coercively restore the normal status of substance as a self-maintaining totality. In order to show the radicalism of Hegel’s conception of power, I contrast Hegel’s power of substance with John Searle’s conception of power. For Searle, who formulates a liberal and juridical conception of power, power is always (1) volitional, and (2) personal. By contrast, for Hegel, I argue, the power of substance is emphatically (1’) non-volitional, and (2’) impersonal or anonymous. Indeed, Hegel relates the non-volitional and impersonal power of substance over individuals to the Greek conception of “fate” [Schicksal]. In contrast to Christian conception of God, for Greeks the power of fate was blind – impersonal, as well as non-volitional.

Finally, I will outline the social ontology that can be developed on the basis of the logic of essence. The social ontology based on the logic of essence is strongly holistic and has the following two main pillars: (1) The totality of society is *sui generis*. This implies, firstly, that, the totality of society exists in its own right. It can sustain and reproduce itself, independently of individuals. Secondly, the *sui generis* nature of totality of society implies that the totality has *causal power* over individuals. That is to say, the totality can override the actions of individuals, if those actions happen to be at odds with the logic of totality. (2) Although there must always be people to occupy the social slots that the totality of society provides them – the social substance is not a spiritual being, it is constituted solely through the action of individuals – a particular individual is simply *dispensable*. A particular individual can be replaced with another individual.

Chapter 4 – The Totality of Capital

The object of Marx's critique of political economy is the totality of social relations of production. In capitalism, such totality, Marx explains, is capital. Marx defines capital as a process that can be depicted as follows:

$$M-C (MP, \text{ and } L) \dots P \dots C' - M'$$

In the formula above, M stands for the initial money that is advanced for investment. This money is used to purchase two sets of commodities: means of production (MP), and labor-power (LP). Through the process of production (P), which involves labor process, a new kind of commodity (C') is produced. As labor process creates surplus-value, the new commodity has more value than the value of MP and L combined. The value of new commodity is realized, when it is sold on the market, and this results in the return of money (M'), which is more than the initial money invested. Importantly, for Marx, capital is not a one-time activity of investment and surplus-value (or profit) making, but the *incessant* and *infinite* process of reinvesting the surplus-value (or profit) already made.

Classical political economy has a *reified* conception of capital. In classical political economy, capital is a “stock” of money, or a “stock” of means of production. In contrast, Marx defines capital in a *relational* way. Capital, for Marx, is not money in isolation, or the process of production in isolation, or commodity in isolation but the very *process* that, so to speak, moves from one to the other. Thus, Marx writes capital is a “self-moving substance” [sich selbst bewegende Substanz] or a “self-moving totality” [sich bewegendes Ganze] that is “constantly changing from one form into the other without becoming lost in this movement”. Marx uses the phrase “metamorphoses of capital” [Die Metamorphosen des Kapitals] to explain the transformation of capital: A

butterfly changes its form from larva, to chrysalis, to moth, while remaining the same butterfly through its metamorphosis. Similarly, capital for Marx changes its form from money, to production, to commodity, while remaining capital throughout the movement. For Marx, thus, quite like Hegel's actuality, capital has a *self*-referential character, and therefore is a *self*.

And quite like Hegel's actuality, capital has a sui generis character. That is to say, capital is able to produce and reproduce itself. It is important to emphasize that the sui generis character of capital, properly speaking, does not obtain at the level of an individual capital, which is perishable, but at the level of "total social capital" [das gesellschaftliche Gesamtkapital], which obtains through interlinking of all individual capitals. According to Marx, the relation of total social capital and individual capitals is by no means harmonious. Rather, what makes total social capital able to produce and reproduce itself is the competition between individual capitals, through which the less profitable capitals inevitably perish.

The sui generis character of the total social capital has two interrelated aspects: (1) Capital is able to produce and reproduce itself *materially*. Namely, capital is able to produce and reproduce commodities and circulate them throughout society. (2) Capital is able to produce and reproduce itself *socially*. That is to say, capital is able to reproduce and sustain the very social relations that are necessary for the existence of capital; it can reproduce capitalists on the one hand, and wage-laborers on the other hand. Regarding the second, social, aspect, what especially secures the sui generis character of capital is the relative surplus population which constantly obtains in capitalism. No matter what the natural rate of growth of population is, the function of capital necessarily renders masses

of people unemployed. The existence of the unemployed, which Marx calls “the industrial reserve army”, reduces the wage of those employed to a minimum, thereby providing a favorable ambience for capital to grow. For Hegel, actuality is *sui generis*, since it is able to produce or “posits” its own “presupposition.” For Marx, capital is *sui generis*, since it produces or “posits” an industrial reserve army that constitutes the very “presupposition” of capital.

Quite like Hegel’s conception of substance and accidents, Marx’s conception of the relation between the totality of capital and individuals is “reflective”. Being a consistent materialist, Marx believes that the totality of capital is constituted *solely* through the interaction of individuals. Yet at the same time, he believes that the totality exists independently of individuals, namely, as “an *alien* social power [*fremde gesellschaftliche Macht*] standing above them”. Indeed, he writes that the laws and regularities of capital function as a “fate” [*Verhängnis*] from which nobody can flee. Contrary to neoclassical economic theory, Marx argues that it is not up to individuals whether or not they would like to enter into the relation of exchange. Although I might be free with regard to *what* kind of commodities I would like to exchange, according to Marx, in capitalism I am absolutely unfree with regard to the fact *that* I have to enter into the relation of exchange.

Finally, I argue, quite like Hegel’s conception, power in capitalism has an (1) impersonal and (2) non-volitional character. (1) The power is impersonal, since in capitalism, individuals exert power over one another, not as private “personal” individuals, but primarily as “personification of economic categories.” (2) Capital has the structure of self, insofar as it is self-maintaining and self-reproducing. But such selfhood

does not involve any free will. Capital for Marx is “an automatic subject” [automatisches Subjekt] that blindly follows the necessary process of augmentation of value. As capital is completely determined by the necessity of augmentation of value, it cannot be properly called free.

Chapter 5- The Power of Necessity

According to Hegel, the power of totality over individuals is absolutely “necessary”. In order to understand what it means that the power of totality is necessary, I begin first with explaining three main points that underlie Hegel’s modal ontology. (1) In contrast to Spinoza, Hegel is not necessitarian. For Hegel contingency is real, and exists in the objective world. (2) Hegel has a much more expansive notion of necessity than the conception of necessity in mechanistic sciences. For Hegel, necessity is not merely defined in terms of causality. Rather, for Hegel, causality is only *one* form of necessary relations that obtains between individuals. Hegel defines the necessary as that which is embedded within the network of relationality. Since such network of relationality is the totality of substance itself, necessity for Hegel, must be always understood in relation to the totality of substance. (3) In traditional metaphysics, whose main object of study was God, necessity generally had the privileged status among modal categories. In contrast, for Hegel, whose logic is deeply social and historical, the category of “actuality” is the centerpiece of modal ontology. Indeed, Hegel defines necessity in relation to actuality. For Hegel, necessity is nothing but the process of actuality constituting itself as actuality, as the process that relates the necessary and the contingent in actuality to constitute actuality.

I use Hegel's "materialist" (my word) critique of cosmological proof of the existence of God to shed light on the dialectic of necessity and contingency in the logic. For Hegel, it is not the case that on the one hand there is a necessary God, and on the other hand there is a contingent world. No such dichotomy exists for Hegel between necessity and contingency. Rather, Hegel maintains that necessity is *already* "immanent" within the mass of contingent phenomena, and needs only to "raise itself up" [sich erheben] from the contingent phenomena. Thus, for Hegel, God does not exist beyond or separable from the contingent world, but it is immanent within the contingent world. That is to say, Hegel's God, in effect, is "actuality" itself.

As Hegel defines necessity as that which is completely embedded within the totality of relations, correspondingly, he defines contingency, primarily as that which falls out of the network of relationality. Contingency for Hegel thus is an *individual* [das Einzelne] that results from "isolation" [Vereinzelung] from the totality. However, such isolation of the contingent from the necessary does not mean that the contingent is self-standing on its own. Rather, the contingent is always dependent on necessity, and is supposed to produce what "the power of necessity" [Macht der Notwendigkeit] has already dictated. Hegel maintains that contingency is an "illusion" [Schein]: the contingent individuals appear on the "surface of nature", and *seem* to be independent of necessity. Yet, at the same time, the contingent individuals are dependent on necessity, and inevitably contribute to the formation of necessity. The "illusion" of contingency, however, is constitutive of necessity – necessity only results from the interaction of the contingent.

We can see now how Hegel makes a radical break with Newtonian type of explanation of natural laws. In Newtonian mechanics, the law is necessary, only the initial conditions are contingent. In Hegel's logic, the law itself results from the interaction of contingent phenomena; the *necessary law*, therefore, is the *law of contingency*. The behavior of one individual bacterium is contingent, and as such cannot be known. Yet, this does not mean that the behavior of the bacterium in question is completely random. Rather, the behavior of the individual bacterium follows from the necessary regularities that the species has, the necessary regularities that themselves are the result of the interaction of contingent individual bacteria.

This conception of necessity, the conception according to which necessity evolves out of contingent phenomena, is underpinning the structure of modern society, and testifies how Hegel's logic is historical. In capitalism, according to Marx, there cannot be any conscious or central regulation of production. Rather, production in capitalism is based on *private* property and *private* investment of individuals, and has therefore, from a social point of view, an essentially non-regulated "anarchic" character. However, such anarchic character, which appears on the surface of bourgeois society, is nonetheless defined by the necessity of laws of capitalist economy. Marx emphasizes that the "disproportions", "incongruences", and "fluctuations" that occur through lack of central planning are not a "defect" that needs to be remedied. Rather, they are necessary "for a mode of production whose laws can only assert themselves [sich durchsetzen] as blindly operating averages between constant irregularities." Marx details how in capitalism the "despotism" of capital and the "anarchy" of the market mutually condition each other. The individuals might think that they are free, since their productive activity is not

centrally regulated; yet in fact they are entirely dominated by the necessary and invisible power of capital that stands above them.

Finally, I end the chapter with a discussion of the nature of freedom in capitalism. The freedom that obtains for individuals in capitalism is not the freedom of self-determination, but the freedom that obtains through contingency. One main form of this freedom qua contingency in capitalism is the freedom of consumption. Since the worker receives his wage, not in kind, but in money, he is able to spend it as he pleases. Yet, freedom of consumption is contingent: whatever he chooses to purchase, he inevitably contributes to the process of accumulation of capital, which in fact subjugates him. The other main form of freedom in capitalism is the freedom for the workers to change their employers. In contrast to slave and feudal societies, where there has been a “necessary” personal bond between an individual slave and an individual master, or between an individual serf and an individual lord, in capitalism the bond between a particular worker and particular capitalist is contingent. Yet, such contingency, which appears to the worker to be his own freedom, is in fact only an “illusion”: Although the worker can sell his labor-power to *any* capitalist, he is nonetheless *necessarily* forced to sell his labor-power to the capitalist class.

5- Power as Constitution and the Critique of Distribution of Power

So far I have given a fairly elaborate picture of the dissertation. In this section, I would like to indicate some more general significance of Hegel’s conception of power. My aim is not at any rate a thorough contextualization of Hegel’s conception of power; my aim is rather only to *indicate* how Hegel’s logical conception of power is directly relevant to the

discussions of power in political philosophy in the ways that go beyond discussions about the nature of capitalism. I will begin with a Hegelian critique of distributive conception of power, and continue with a more general, Hegelian, critique of individualistic conceptions of power.

One major paradigm of liberal political philosophy defines justice in terms of distribution of “social goods”. A just society is a society, in which the primary social goods are distributed justly. The social goods that are to be distributed are both material goods (such as wealth, property, income, health care), and immaterial goods (such as human rights, basic liberties and self-respect.) Within the paradigm of distributive justice, power is either not discussed at all, or if it is discussed, it is just regarded as one other social good that must be, along others, justly distributed.

From a Hegelian perspective, the theories of distributive justice are based on a social ontology that is based on the logic of being. In justice as distribution, individuals are primarily conceived – to use the language of Iris Marion Young – as “possessors”, who exist prior to, and thereby separable from, what they possess. Now, if power is conceived as a social good in this way, it is in effect regarded as some “thing”, some “stuff” that can be owned, can be alienated, and can be transferred from one to another. Individuals might have more or less of power; they might acquire or lose some power, but they remain what they are qua individuals, independently of the power that they possess. In Hegel’s language, power remains “external” to the structure of individuals. Corresponding to the externality of power to individuals, the major way that the

distributive conception can analyze power is “comparing” the power of an individual or a group of people and the power of another individual or another group of people.¹⁷

From a Hegelian point of view, there are two major problems with the distributive conception of power: Firstly, and evidently, power is not a “thing” that can be owned or disowned. Power is rather *essentially* relational.¹⁸ It is only in relation to other people that it can be meaningfully said that I have or do not have power. Secondly, and more radically, for Hegel, there is no self-standing individual prior to the relation of power. Rather, individuals are the *product* of the relation of power that obtains between them. What appears to be on the surface-level the possession of power by an individual is in truth the effect of the social relations in which the individual stand.

That Hegel criticizes the distributive conception of power does not imply, at any rate, that he denies the fact that some individuals or groups of individuals are more

¹⁷ See Iris Marion Young’s compelling criticism of the paradigm of distributive justice (1990: Chapter 1), from which I draw substantially in this section. Young does not refer to Hegel’s logic, yet the spirit of her criticism of distributive paradigm is quite Hegelian. Fully in accord with Hegel’s critique of the logic of being, Young writes: (1) “Justice [in distributive paradigm] involves an ensemble of possessive relations. In a possessive relation the individual is distinct from the object possessed...In such a possessive model the nature of the possessing subject is prior to and independent of the goods possessed; the self underlies and is unchanged by alternative distributions. Justice concerns the proper distribution of the allocation of the entities among such antecedently existing individuals” (17). (2) “All situations in which justice is at issue are analogous to the situation of persons dividing a stock of goods and comparing the size of the portions individuals have. Such a model implicitly assumes that individuals or other agents lie as nodes, points in the social field, among whom larger or smaller bundles of social goods are assigned. The individuals are externally related to the goods they possess, and their only relation to one another that matters from the point of view of the paradigm is a comparison of the amount of goods they possess. The distributive paradigm thus implicitly assumes a social *atomism*, inasmuch as there is no internal relation among persons in society relevant to considerations of justice.” (18)

¹⁸ This point is also made by Young: “Conceptualizing power in distributive terms means implicitly or explicitly conceiving power as a kind of stuff possessed by individual agents in greater or lesser amounts...Regarding power as a possession or attribute of individuals tends to obscure the fact that power is a relation than a thing” (ibid:31).

powerful than others. The critique of distributive concept of power, rather, means that the seeming distribution of power occurs within an institutional framework, within a structure – namely, within a social “totality”, or a social “substance” – which determines such distribution. That is to say, the distribution of power is not self-standing, but it is a “surface appearance”, a “semblance” or an “illusion” [Schein] that is determined by the totality of social institutions.

Although Marx (for good reasons) does not discuss the distribution of power, and focuses on distribution as an economic category, it is helpful to consider his critique of those economic theories that mainly focus on distribution. In his critique of the program of the Social Democratic Workers’ Party of Germany, the *Critique of Gotha Program* (1875), he writes,

It was in general a mistake to make a fuss about so-called *distribution* [*Verteilung*] and put the principal stress on it. Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of non-workers in the form of capital and land ownership, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labor power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the collective property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. The vulgar socialists (and from them in turn a section of the Democrats) have taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long

been made clear, why retrogress again? (*MECW* 24:88-9, *MEW* 19:22, original emphasis)

In interpreting this passage, we must note, what Marx means by “mode of production” [Produktionsweise] is not merely the material process of production, but more expansively, the *totality* of relations that characterize social production and reproduction in a specific period of history. For Marx, distribution always takes place within the totality of production and reproduction of society, and thus is determined by that totality.¹⁹ A social-democratic program that focuses on distribution draws the attention *away* from capitalist mode of production in its entirety. Thus, such focusing on distribution, despite its good intentions, functions as ideology. The attempts at equalization of wages, or just distribution of resources in capitalism is doomed to failure, since distribution in capitalism is constitutively defined by the antagonistic and oppositional social relations between capitalist and workers, the antagonistic relations that foreclose, from the very beginning, any equal or just distribution of resources.

Similarly, according to Hegel, the distribution of power is a surface-appearance of the institutional framework or the totality of relations that determine the terms and conditions of such distribution. That is to say, the *distribution* of power remains always subordinate to the *constitution* of power. Thus, it is not possible at all to change the

¹⁹ See also (1) the following illuminating passage from the *Grundrisse*: “The structure [Gliederung] of distribution [Distribution] is completely determined [vollständig bestimmt] by the structure of production. Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in its object, in that only the results of production can be distributed, but also in its form, in that the specific kind of participation in production determines the specific forms of distribution, i.e. the patterns of participation in distribution” (*MEW* 42:30, *G* 95), and (2) the following statement from Marx’s *Economic Manuscripts 1861-3*: “The relations of distribution are only the relations of production seen *sub alia specie*.” (*MECW* 32:248)

distribution of power, if the constitution of power remains the same. And understanding the constitution of power is the task of the logic of essence.²⁰

The distributive conception of power is one instance of more general *individualistic* conceptions of power. In order to better understand the significance of Hegel's *constitutive* conception of power, it is helpful to briefly dwell on the individualistic conception. Consider Thomas Hobbes as a major proponent of the individualistic conception. In the *Leviathan*, he conceives of power primarily as an attribute of one single individual: "The power of *a man* (to take it universally) is his present means to obtains some future apparent good" (Chapter 10, §1, original emphasis). Hobbes does not deny that power can be attributed to an assembly of individuals, yet he believes that such power of the assembly results from the mechanical addition of the power of all individuals in that assembly. Furthermore, Hobbes believes that an individual can *transfer* his power to another individual at will. Indeed, these two points – the first point being that the power of the whole is equal with the *addition* of power of all individuals constituting the whole, and, the second point being that individuals can *alienate* and *transfer* their power to a third party – underpin his conception of the power of sovereign: all individuals *first* alienate their power and transfer it by their free will to one single centralized sovereign power, and *then* the sovereign power provides all individuals who are now powerless with safety and peace:

²⁰ To be fair to the theories of distributive justice, they also demand that, in order for distribution of power to be just, the social institutions and the totality thereof should change. However, for them, the main question remains the question of distribution all the same. Generally, the theories of distributive justice are content with some vague invocations to the institutions, vague invocations that remain without any substantive content, without any actual analysis of what the institutions, in fact, are.

The greatest of human powers, is that which is *compounded* of the power of most men, united *by consent* in one person, natural or civil, that has the use of all their powers depending on his will; such as is the power of a common-wealth. (Chapter 10, §3, emphases added)

In a sharp contrast to Hobbes, for Hegel, power is not primarily an attribute of an individual. Precisely speaking, whereas for Hobbes individuals *have* power, for Hegel individuals *are* constituted by power. The very constitution of individuals, for Hegel, is the product of the totality of relations of power that obtains between individuals. Indeed, as I have already mentioned in the summary of Chapter 3, individuals have the “illusion” that they are actually the ones who exert power over one another. In truth, however, the power of individuals over each other is the effect of the power of social totality, which renders one powerful, and the other powerless. Moreover, since power is constitutive of individuals, they cannot alienate it from themselves at their will, or transfer it to somebody else – if they could, they would cease to be what they are. The power of totality does not result from any deliberate transferring of power, but obtains through the social interrelation of individuals, and independently of what individuals consciously think or do.²¹

6- The Literature on Hegel’s Logical Conception of Power

Writing a dissertation on the logical conception of power in Hegel occurred to me through reading Michael Theunissen’s groundbreaking work on the *Science of Logic*, namely, *Sein und Schein: die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik* (1978). In the

²¹ For a helpful discussion of constitution of power (without referring to Hegel), See Martin Saar (2010). Also, See his book on Spinoza’s conception of power, where he defends the thesis that for Spinoza power is constitutive (2013).

introduction of the book, Theunissen makes two insightful claims that are pivotal to my dissertation, namely, the claim that the logic of being is the logic of the relation of “Gleichgültigkeit” (indifference), and the claim that the logic of essence is the logic of the relation of “Herrschaft” (domination) (ibid: 25-37). Indifference and domination are terms that clearly have social connotations. Thus, by making those two claims, Theunissen in effect opens up the possibility of developing a social interpretation of Hegel’s logic, a task that he himself does not undertake in the book.

That the logic of being is the logic of indifference, and that the logic of essence is the logic of domination constitute the very basis of my interpretation of Hegel. Thus, the current dissertation would have not been possible without Theunissen’s work. Expressing my debt to Theunissen notwithstanding, my work takes a radically different route. Most notably, the theme of power is only marginal in Theunissen’s work; he deals with it mainly in the aforementioned introductory pages. In terms of content, almost half of Theunissen’s book is about the logic of being. Insofar as the logic of essence is concerned, he focuses on the beginning of the logic of essence, mainly, on the category of Schein, and to a lesser extent, on the determinations of reflection – and there is almost no discussion of totality. Finally and most importantly, there is only an *indication* of the possibility of social interpretation of the logic, and not an actual treatment. Correspondingly, the central thesis of my dissertation, the thesis that the logic of essence is the ontology of power *in capitalism*, is not treated at all in Theunissen’s book.²²

²² However, in another short essay, “Krise der Macht: Thesen zur Theorie des dialektischen Widerspruchs” (1975), Theunissen offers some insightful parallels between Hegel’s logic and Marx’s critique of political economy. Yet, the scope of treatment is mainly limited to some general remarks on determinations of reflection. In addition to the aforementioned book and essay, Theunissen addresses the logical conception of power in Hegel in another essay, “Begriff

Continuing Theunissen's work, Hinrich Fink-Eitel in his *Dialektik und Sozialethik: Kommentierende Untersuchungen zu Hegels Logik* (1978) gives a commentary on the logic of being and the logic of essence to show how being and essence are to be understood, respectively, in terms of indifference and domination.²³ Although insightful in some parts, Fink-Eitel's book remains in the framework of a commentary. My method of exposition and the way that I develop the theme of power in Hegel is entirely different from Fink-Eitel's. My specific contribution is to show how Hegel's logic expresses the structure of power in capitalism, and that is absent in Fink-Eitel's work.²⁴

und Realität: Hegels Aufhebung des metaphysischen Wahrheitsbegriffs" (1989 [1975]). In this second essay, Theunissen discusses the theme of power in the logic of the Concept. Theunissen understands Hegel's Concept as that which has the power of "overreaching over reality" [Übergreifen auf Realität] and interprets Hegel's "idealism" in terms of the capacity of the Concept to mold reality. ("Das Hegelsche System beruht auf drei Hypothesen: erstens, dass der Begriff auf Realität überzugreifen vermöge, zweitens, dass sein Übergreifen sich im vollständigen Übergreifen vollende, und drittens dass beide Bewegungen durch ein "ewiges", schlechthin anfängliches Übergreifen ermöglicht würden." (351)). According to Theunissen, the power of the Concept to overreach over reality is grounded upon Hegel's theology, which is a "Herrschaftstheologie" – a theology based on the belief of the "domination" of God on the Earth. Notably, Theunissen's interpretation of the theological underpinning of Hegel's logic of Concept in this essay is different from his book *Sein und Schein*. I do not deal with Hegel's Concept (except in the Conclusion, where I also discuss Theunissen's conception of the transition of essence to the Concept in *Sein und Schein*). Furthermore, I do not presuppose any kind of theology in interpreting the logic. (For a recent critique of Theunissen's latter essay, see (Yeomans: 2015).

²³ Notably, Fink-Eitel wrote the book as a dissertation with the supervision of Theunissen.

²⁴ There is another, very brief, discussion of power in the logic in Emil Angehrn (1977: 66-70). He was also a student of Theunissen, and was also engaged with Marx. Finally, I would like to add that, from the point of view of sociology of knowledge, it is interesting to observe that all the works mentioned above have been written in 70s, when Marx was still an option. (Although this does not mean that the mainstream Hegel scholarship even then paid any substantial attention to Marx; the works cited are rather exceptions.) With the so-called demise of Marxism in 90s and onwards, the theme of power in Hegel's logic was not discussed anymore. Hegel became in the departments of philosophy in Germany and in the Anglophone world, almost exclusively, the philosopher of (bourgeois) freedom.

Part I: The Logic of Illusion [Schein]

Chapter 1: Illusion [Schein] as Ideology

However, the dialectical method does not permit us simply to proclaim the ‘falseness’ of this consciousness [i.e. ideology] and to persist in an inflexible confrontation of true and false. On the contrary, it requires us to investigate this ‘false consciousness’ concretely as a moment of the *historical totality*, to which it belongs, and as a layer in the historical process, in which it is effective. (Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 1968 [1923]: 50, my emphasis)²⁵

1- The Critique of “Our Moral Intuitions” of Equality and Freedom

Liberal political philosophy, to make a good rough generalization, takes individuals to be free and equal, and then endeavors to construct ideal social and political systems that can accommodate and foster such freedom and equality. In one main branch of liberalism, one for which John Rawls is a major representative, no argument is given as to why individuals are to be conceived as equal and free. It is suggested, rather, that we share the

²⁵ “Die dialektische Methode gestattet uns jedoch auch hier nicht, bei einem einfachen Feststellen der ‘Falschheit’ dieses Bewußtseins, bei einer starren Gegenüberstellung von wahr und falsch stehen zu bleiben. Sie fordert vielmehr, daß dieses »falsche Bewußtsein« als Moment jener geschichtlichen Totalität, der es angehört, als Stufe jenes geschichtlichen Prozesses, in dem es wirksam ist, konkret untersucht werde.”

basic moral *intuition* that we are equal and free, and that if anybody looks deep into his heart, he would automatically accept that moral intuition.²⁶

From a Hegelian or a Marxist perspective, this way of procedure, i.e. beginning from moral intuitions of individuals and constructing a theory that accords to those moral intuitions, is deeply problematic. Intuitions, in the Hegelian or Marxist tradition, are not brute facts. Rather, intuitions are facts that are themselves in need of explanation; and they need to be explained through their status and function in the social context within which they arise. In case of freedom and equality, Marx is adamantly clear that the so-called intuitions of equality and freedom emerge with the rise of capitalist market economy, and thus they should be explained by a thorough analysis of the capitalist market economy in its totality. Indeed, Marx believes that by such holistic analysis, it becomes clear that the moral intuitions of equality and freedom, far from being trustworthy, are indeed ideological. That is to say, in developed capitalist societies, individuals share the intuition that they are equal and free, yet they are in fact unequal and unfree.

²⁶ For a powerful and compelling critique of Rawls' reliance on our basic moral intuitions to construct a political philosophy, see Raymond Geuss (2008, Part II, p. 59-101). Geuss emphasizes (1) that intuitions are historically and culturally variable, and thus cannot serve as fixed starting points for political philosophy, and (2) that the intuitions shared by people in a specific society might be in fact ideological. See especially the following two passages: (1) "A weakness of approaches to politics through 'intuitions' is that such intuitions present themselves at any given time as if they were firmly fixed, deeply rooted in the bedrock of human nature, and utterly unchanging, although even a minimal amount of historical (or ethnological) research reveals that many of the most politically significant of these intuitions are in fact highly variable and change in ways that seem to some extent to reflect other social changes. It was at one time – for long periods of Western history – the very epitome of justice that one not treat all men as equal (and in particular that one not treat a free man like a slave or a slave like a free man)." (91). (2) "To think that an appropriate point of departure for understanding the political world is *our* intuitions of what is 'just,' *without* reflecting on where those intuitions come from, how they are maintained, and what interests they might serve, seems to exclude from the beginning the very possibility that these intuitions might themselves be 'ideological.'"²⁷ (90)

From a philological point of view, it is noteworthy that in his mature works – in which Marx undertakes a systematic and detailed analysis of the economic structure of society in capitalism – Marx quite rarely uses the term “ideology”; rather he uses the term “Schein” to describe the status of freedom and equality in capitalism. Schein is a perfect term for Marx’s purpose; since, firstly, it captures the *intuitive* aspect of ideology, namely, as that which appears to us immediately to be the case, and secondly, it captures the *illusory* character of ideology, namely, as a surface-appearance which is wrong and misleading. For an adequate critique of ideology, Marx cannot simply appeal to some other intuitions that contradict the intuitions on which liberal political philosophy is based. (He cannot make an argument like this: Look at the status of black people in West Baltimore! How could they possibly be considered as free, and as equal with the CEOs in Wall Street?) Rather, in order to meet up with his standards of scientific and systematic explanation, Marx needs to show (1) why people, in capitalism, intuitively believe that they are equal and free, (2) why such belief in equality and freedom, in capitalism, is illusory, and (3) why despite the illusory character of the belief in equality and freedom, people *continue* to hold it.

My general aim in this chapter is to show how Hegel’s (critique of) Schein in the beginning of the logic of essence captures the logic of (the critique of) ideology. My more specific aim is to demonstrate that and how Hegel’s conception of Schein expresses the general structure of the ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism. In what follows, in Section 1, I begin with explaining Adorno’s conception of ideology in his later sociological works with the aim of carving out the logic that underpins such conception. I continue with discussing Hegel in three sections. In Section 2, I

contextualize the category of Schein within the *Science of Logic*. For Hegel Schein is being as reconceived within the structure of essence. In Section 3, I offer a detailed analysis of the dialectic of Schein in the *Science of Logic* in order to explain *how* Hegel conceives being within essence. I also indicate how Hegel's dialectic of Schein helps us understand the relation of the ideology of equality and freedom to the essence of inequality and unfreedom in capitalism. I conclude the Hegel part, in Section 4, with a brief discussion of Hegel's own conception of ideology in the *Philosophy of Right* in order to show how that conception – at the logical level – accords to his conception of Schein in the *Science of Logic*. Finally, in Section 5, I turn to Marx, and through a fairly elaborate discussion of his economic theory on relevant points, demonstrate that and how Marx's critique of the ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism closely parallels Hegel's dialectic of Schein.

In closing of this introductory section, I would like to say a few words about translation. There is not any one single English word that can capture the full meaning of Schein. As a result, Schein has been translated in the literature on Hegel with various terms: semblance, seeming, show, shine, guise, mere appearance, surface appearance, illusion, illusory being, etc. In this chapter – and in this dissertation – I will translate Schein, for the most part, either as semblance or as illusion; since these two words capture both the *intuitive* aspect and the *falsity* of Schein. I will also, occasionally, use surface-appearance, when it is appropriate to the context.

2- Adorno's Logical Conception of Ideology

Adorno's most focused discussion of ideology, in his later work, can be found in his essay "Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre" (1954) (*GS* 8:457-477). He also dwells on the concept of ideology in his now published lectures, as well as in the *Negative Dialectics* (1966) (*GS* 6). In this section, my aim is to explain the *general* structure of Adorno's conception of ideology. I will also outline how this general structure is at work in the critique of ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism. Adorno, quite characteristically, does not develop his insights in any sufficient, scientific detail. I will systematically substantiate these insights in the next sections on Hegel, and on Marx. For my purpose – my purpose being carving out the logical structure of ideology for Adorno – two main features characterize ideology: firstly, ideology is a "socially necessary illusion" [gesellschaftlich notwendiger Schein] (*GS* 6:348) (2-1), and secondly, ideology is at the same time true and false (2-2).²⁷

2-1- Ideology as "Socially Necessary Illusion"

Marx's conception of ideology radically breaks from the conception of ideology in the enlightenment tradition. According to the enlightened conception of ideology – for which Francis Bacon, Kant, and in the contemporary world, Noam Chomsky are among the best representatives – the primary locus of ideology is an individual subject. An individual holds ideological belief, since he lacks proper education; or he lacks courage or he is lazy to think on his own and instead prefer to rely on authorities; or he is afflicted with

²⁷ For quite helpful discussions of the concept of ideology in the tradition of Critical Theory, see Jaeggi (2009), Geuss (1981:4-44), and Schnädelbach (1969).

prejudices; or simply because he is ignorant.²⁸ Thus, in a nutshell, ideology in the enlightened tradition is a kind of *cognitive error* or *cognitive failure* held by individuals that can be remedied through proper education, through willingness to think on one's own, and through enlightened, critical thinking.

By contrast, in the Marxist tradition, the locus of ideology is not individuals, but the social relations between individuals. In this tradition, not all false ideas, no matter how deeply they are held, would count as ideology. Rather, only those false ideas would count as ideology that are grounded in social relations – and not on any kind of social relations, but only on those social relations that are essential to a given society. To give an example, some people, out of some specific religious conviction, might believe that the age of the Earth is only a few thousand years. However, this plainly false belief is not, properly speaking, ideology. The belief or lack of belief of those people in the young Earth does not arguably affect the deeper social and political structure of society. By contrast, people's belief that they are equal and free in capitalism is ideology, since such belief is grounded in the social relations that are essential to capitalism; capitalism cannot possibly exist without the belief of people that they are free and equal.

It is exactly in the spirit of this Marxist conception of ideology that Adorno defines ideology as “socially necessary illusion”. This definition has two interrelated

²⁸ Bacon and Kant do not use the term ideology, yet they mean the same thing. (1) In the *New Organon*, Bacon positions the locus of ideology either in human nature common to all people (“idols of the tribe”), or peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of the individuals (“idols of the cave”), or regards ideology as originating from public human communication through careless exchange of words between individuals (“idols of the marketplace”). In all these instances, an individualistic conception of ideology is presupposed. (2) In *An Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment*, Kant ascribes the reason for people's tendency to embrace ideology to their “laziness and cowardice”, their “lack of resolution to use understanding without the guidance of another”, and to their fixation on “dogmas and formulas.”(See *Kant's Political Writings*, p54-55)

aspects: (1) ideology is “socially necessary”, and (2) ideology is a “necessary illusion”. In the following, I explain each in turn.

(1) Ideology is “socially necessary” in the sense that it is embodied in social, political, and legal institutions that are constitutive of society. The belief of people in equality and freedom in capitalism is embodied in the relation of exchange of commodities, and in the legal contract that enforces it. The institution of exchange and the institution of contract thus have “ideational component”²⁹, and cannot possibly exist, without such ideational component³⁰. The necessity of ideology can be expressed in two logically interdependent aspects: systematic and functional. The necessity of ideology is *systematic*, in the sense that it fundamentally coheres with the essential structure or the totality of society. The belief in equality and freedom in capitalism strongly coheres with the institution of law, with the institution of market, and with the capitalist political state. The necessity of ideology is *functional*, in the sense that ideology has a proper function within the totality of society, a proper function that contributes to the self-maintenance and self-reproduction of society.³¹

(2) In contrast to the mere cognitive failures – the mere cognitive failures that we can designate, for the sake of clarity, as “errors” – ideology in the Marxist conception, is

²⁹ The phrase “ideational component” is Roy Bhaskar’s, although he does not use it to explain the ideas that are constitutive of reality (2005:72). See the next footnote.

³⁰ The radical change in the conception of ideology in Marx accords to the radical change that Hegel initiates in the conception of idea, which Marx subsequently assimilates. Very briefly, this radical change can be expressed in two points: Firstly, whereas in the enlightenment tradition, to make a crude generalization, ideas are *representational* of reality, for Hegel, ideas are *constitutive* of reality. Secondly, whereas in the enlightenment tradition, ideas are primarily theoretical and cognitive, for Hegel ideas are “*actual*” [wirklich], that is to say, they are active and “effective” [wirkend] in reality (Cf. Jaeggi 2009:275 footnote 16).

³¹ In Chapter 4, I argue in detail how capital for Marx is a totality that is sui generis, namely, a totality that is self-producing and self-maintaining.

an “illusion” that is “necessary”. That is to say, ideology cannot be wiped out through education, through enlightened reasoning, or through some voluntary resolution to think critically. I may have read all the three volumes of Marx’s *Capital*, and may have completely understood why equality and freedom in capitalism are ideology; yet I cannot help acting upon those very ideas: Whenever I engage in an economic transaction in capitalism – and that includes not only buying consumer goods, but also selling my labor-power on a daily basis – no matter what I think, I practically, and in effect, act on the basis of the ideas of equality and freedom. That is to say, I am not, at any rate, in a position to undo my illusions. Thus, in contrast to the enlightened tradition, which focuses on education, for Marx, the only way that the ideological illusions can be removed is through a collective emancipatory praxis, a collective emancipatory praxis that would radically change the very social relations in which those illusions are institutionalized.

2-2- Ideology as the “Interfolding of Truth and Untruth”

The distinction between error and illusion is in fact helpful to approach the truth-content of ideology. While error is plainly false – the belief in the young Earth is plainly false – ideology is an illusion that, because of its necessity and objectivity participates in truth. Thus, Adorno insists that ideology is the “the interfolding of truth and untruth, which is distinct from complete truth as well as from mere lie” [Verschränkung des Wahren und Unwahren, die sich von der vollen Wahrheit ebenso scheidet wie von der bloßen Lüge] (GS 8:465). That ideology is the “interfolding” of truth and falsity needs explanation. The word “interfolding” might suggest that what are being interfolded can be unfolded from

each other – like my arms that I can fold together, and then unfold. However, For Adorno, the truth and falsity of ideology are so interpenetrated that it is impossible to have one without the other.³²

That in ideology truth and falsity interpenetrate implies that ideology is in a sense contradictory. The contradiction involved in ideology, however, is not a contradiction of traditional logic. (By contradiction of the traditional logic I mean something of the following sort: The board is white, and the board is not white, at the same time and with the same respect.) The principle of non-contradiction that is formulated in the traditional logic is the minimal condition for any rational, consistent thought. And Adorno, following Hegel and Marx, completely adheres to the principle of non-contradiction. Rather, the contradiction inherent in ideology is a dialectical contradiction. Unfortunately Adorno does not elaborate on the structure of the dialectical contradiction of ideology. In the next sections, I discuss in detail the structure of the contradiction of ideology through Hegel's logic, and through Marx's economic analysis. For now, I would like to preliminarily indicate two principal ways that Adorno's claim of the interfolding of truth and falsity of ideology, and the contradiction that ensues from it, can be understood. These points are meant to motivate my later discussion in Hegel and in Marx. In both points, I explain the interfolding of truth and falsity of ideology by using the case of ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism.

³² To give another example, ideology, for Adorno, is *not* a like a report in a newspaper, which contains both true and false facts, a report that can be purged of its falsities.

2-2-1- Ideology as Surface-Appearance, and as the Surface-Appearance of Essence

The capitalist society necessarily appears to individuals as a system of equality and freedom. In a certain sense, individuals are indeed equal and free in capitalism. If they were not equal and free, they could not engage in market transactions – since market transaction necessarily presuppose equality and freedom. However, in capitalism, the equality and freedom that obtains in market is only a surface-appearance *of* a deeper essence, a deeper essence that is defined in terms of inequality and domination. Thus, viewed this way the ideology of equality and freedom is both true and false. It is true insofar as it is conceived as a surface-appearance that exists on its own. It is false insofar as it is conceived as a surface-appearance *of* an essence, as a semblance *of* an essence that conceals the essence.

2-2-2- Ideology as Self-Standing Moment, and as the Moment of Totality

As we will see later in detail in Chapter 3, Hegel conceives of essence as totality. In case of capitalism, the essence of capitalism is the totality of social relations constituting capitalism, and such totality, according to Marx, is capital itself. Thus the same point regarding the relation of essence and surface-appearance explained above can be translated as follows. The institution of market, which operates on the basis of equality and freedom, is not all that there is to capitalism. Rather, market functions as a moment of the totality of capital, as a moment that systematically and functionally coheres with the totality of capital. The ideology of equality and freedom thus is true insofar as the market is conceived in isolation from the totality of capital. However, the ideology of equality and freedom is false insofar as it is conceived as a moment *of* capital, as a

moment that does not exist on its own, or for its own sake, but as a moment that both coheres with the totality of capital and furthers the self-production and self-reproduction of the totality of capital.³³

* * *

Adorno considers ideological thinking – i.e. the kind of thinking that does not recognize ideology *as* ideology – to be “reified”. According to Adorno, the hallmark of reified consciousness is “forgetfulness” [Vergessen] (*NS-V* 6:226). The reified consciousness *forgets* that the intuitions are not self-standing, and that they are the effect of essence. The reified consciousness “fetishizes” intuitions, and *forgets* the whole of which the intuitions are but a moment.³⁴ As reified consciousness is marked by forgetfulness, the critique of reified consciousness (or the critique of ideology) consists exactly in the act of “remembering” [Erinnerung], the act of remembering that shows the systematic interconnection of ideology with the totality of essence. Thus, a successful critique of ideology does not simply point out some inconsistencies, or absurdities, or

³³ There is a third, very important, aspect for ideology for Adorno that I express as follows: 2-2-3- Ideology as Self-Standing Value, and as Value in its Actualization. To explicate: for Adorno, the ideas of freedom and equality are “in themselves” [an sich] good and desirable, yet such ideas within the actuality of capitalism become bad and oppressive; they become bad and oppressive, since they function solely as a moment of the totality of capital. Thus, Adorno writes, “Unwahr werden eigentliche Ideologien erst durch ihr Verhältnis zu der bestehenden Wirklichkeit. Sie können ‘an sich’ wahr sein, so wie die Ideen Freiheit, Menschlichkeit, Gerechtigkeit es sind, aber sie gebärden sich, als wären sie bereits realisiert.” (*GS* 8:473) Importantly, this third aspect of ideology, which is concerned with the status of values, is absent in Hegel’s logic of essence, as well as in Marx’s scientific analysis of capitalism. The distinction between value in itself, and value in its actualization is indeed reminiscent of Kant’s distinction between noumenal and phenomenal world, and testifies Adorno’s ultimately (post-Hegelian) Kantianism. There is no such Kantian distinction between values and facts in the logic of essence, and for that matter, in Marx.

³⁴ Also: “Man kann sagen, daß die Fetischisierung des Geschichtlichen, also die Verabsolutierung eines Gewordenen und das Vergessen dessen, was geworden ist, zu dem Wesen der Ideologie notwendig gehören.” (*NS-V* 6:226)

insufficiencies in ideology, but requires a detailed and through analysis of the totality, of which ideology is a moment. The critique of ideology is thus not a moralistic critique; it is rather – to use a term from Roy Bhaskar – an “explanatory critique”, a critique that by means of *explanation* of the systematic interconnection of ideology with totality *criticizes* ideology.

3- Semblance in the Logic of Essence

I have argued so far that ideology for Adorno is an intuitive awareness that is socially necessary, an intuitive awareness that is embodied within the prevailing social, economic and political institutions of capitalism. I have argued that such intuitive awareness is false, but such falsity is constitutive of the essence of capitalism, and thus cannot be wiped out through enlightened reasoning. In this section, my aim is to discuss what Schein in the logic of essence is. For Hegel, Schein is being as reconceived within the structure of essence. Thus, in order to know what it is that Hegel calls Schein, we need to know what being is, what essence is, and what being within essence is. Thus, my first task is to contextualize Hegel’s discussion of Schein within the overall framework of the objective logic (3-1)³⁵. I will then show that Hegel’s Schein is to be conceived as ideology and that Schein, as ideology, is necessary (3-2). I conclude with a brief explanation about the distinction between two categories that denote the way that essence appears: Schein (semblance), and Erscheinung (appearance) (3-3).

³⁵ I have already discussed my general interpretive approach towards the logic of being and the logic of essence in the Introduction to the dissertation. This section further elaborates on the themes discussed there.

3-1- The Logic of Being as the Logic of Gleichgültigkeit and the Logic of Essence as the Logic of Domination

Let me begin first with the logic of being. In the logic of being, Hegel conceives of the relation between individuals in terms of the relation of Gleichgültigkeit. For Hegel, the relation of Gleichgültigkeit has two aspects: (1) The two individuals that are in a relation of Gleichgültigkeit with each other are “indifferent” towards one another, and towards the relation between them. This means that the relation is not fully constitutive of the individuals, and remains *external* to them. That is, the individuals in the logic of being are “self-subsistent” and exist independently from the relation between them. (2) The two individuals in this relation have a *symmetrical* relation with each other; the one defines the other to the same extent that the other defines the one. In this sense, the relation of Gleichgültigkeit is the relation of “equality”, since the relation is *equally valid* [gleich gelten] for both of them. The two aspects of the relation of Gleichgültigkeit for Hegel are strictly interrelated. When the individuals are *equal* with each other, there remains an *indifferent* core to them that is not determinable through the relation between them. Similarly, the *equality* of individuals obtains by virtue of their *indifference* to each other. In the logic of being the individuals remain unanalyzable “atoms” that cannot become fully determinate. They are simply given, or in Hegel’s language, immediate. The logic of being terminates with the category of “absolute indifference” that expresses the unsurpassable conceptual block that is attained within the framework of being. Hegel’s exposition of the logic of being therefore is to *criticize* it.

The failure of the logic of being to be adequately determinate demonstrates that being is not sustainable by itself; rather it has to be situated within a more determinate category, namely essence, that gives determination to it. Importantly, essence is not

simply another category of the same nature as the categories of being that would emerge in further development of being; but it is fundamentally of “different nature” (*WdL* II:15, *SL* 390). This *radically* different nature can be articulated especially in the following two ways: (1) The ontology that Hegel develops in the logic of essence is *absolutely* relational. That is, in the logic of essence the categories are defined *solely* through their relation to each other. Whereas in the logic of being, individuals remain *independent* from the relations that obtain among them, in the logic of essence, individuals are *solely* derived from these relations. (2) The ontology developed in the logic of essence is the ontology of *domination* [Herrschaft]. In contrast to the relation of equality obtained in the logic of being, in the logic of essence the categories are in an *asymmetrical* relation with each other. This relation of domination, however, is of a special type. It is not direct or immediate; rather it obtains through incorporating a moment of the relation of equality. In other words, the relation of domination in essence obtains, not *despite* equality, but precisely *through* equality.

It is helpful to illustrate the above points through examples. (1) The paradigmatic example of the relation of equality in the logic of being is the relation between “something” [Etwas] and “an other” [ein Anderes], between, say, a table and a chair. The two define each other equally. Hegel writes, “if of two things we call one A, and the other B, then in the first instance B is determined as the Other. But A is just *as much* the Other of B. Both are, *in the same way*, Others.” (*WdL* I:125, *SL*:117, my emphases) Moreover, although there *is* a relation between something and other, nonetheless each exists independently from the relation. (Table and chair have a certain spatial or functional relation with each other; yet each of them exists independently of the other.) (2) A

paradigmatic example of the logic of essence is the relation of “substance” and “accidents”. They are, according to Hegel, solely defined through each other. Substance is always substance *of* accidents, and accidents are always accidents *of* substance. There is an *asymmetrical* relation of domination between the two; since it is *ultimately* substance that gives determination to accidents. However, the relation of domination contains a moment of equality; since inasmuch as accidents are dependent upon substance, for Hegel, substance is dependent upon accidents. The first instance of the relation of domination in the logic of essence is the one obtaining between essence and semblance. I will discuss this in detail later in the chapter.

3-2- Hegel’s Semblance as Ideology

The common-sense ontology that forms our intuitive awareness of the social world accords to the logic of being. That is to say, in our everyday life we conceive of the relation between individuals in terms of the relation of Gleichgültigkeit. Recall that Gleichgültigkeit has the two meaning of *indifference*, and *equality*. Intuitively, we see an individual – to use a term from Michael Sandel – as an “unencumbered self” (1984), as a self that is separable from the social relations in which he stands. The individual, so it seems to us, has an inner citadel, which is ultimately unaffected by, and, therefore, is *indifferent* towards the surrounding social relations. All individuals share such inner citadel, and thus, to that extent, all individuals are *equal* with each other. There is no relation of power between individuals, or if there is, it remains external to what makes the individual what he is. Indeed, such equality between individuals obtains through indifference of individuals to one another. And such indifference grants individuals

freedom: it seems to us that individuals are free to choose, as if from afar, what kind of social role they want to take on. Finally, in our intuitive awareness, we regard individuals as totally distinct from each other, and we distinguish individuals in terms of the qualities and quantities that they bear³⁶. We tend to characterize a human being X as distinct from others, through, say, their gender, nationality, race, money, wealth, IQ score, etc.

However, such conception of individuals – as equal, as free, and as distinct bearers of qualities and quantities – is not true. Rather, Hegel asserts, “the *truth* of being is *essence*” [Die *Wahrheit* des *Seins* ist das *Wesen*], and, then, continues:

Being is the immediate. Since knowing has for its goal knowledge of the true, knowledge of what being is *in and for itself*, it does not stop at the immediate and its determinations, but penetrates it on the supposition that at the back of this being there is something else, something other than being itself, that this background constitutes the truth of being. (*WdL* II:13, *SL* 390)

The logic of essence provides the essential categories to understand the invisible background of the visible individuals, the invisible background that is the “truth” of the visible individuals. Now, what *seems* to be a particular human-being with particular qualities and quantities turns out *actually* not to be self-subsistent, but a result of certain relations, causes, grounds, conditions, forces etc. that constitute it. It turns out the individuals do not have any core, untouched by mediations, but they are thoroughly – absolutely – mediated. Thus, Hegel insists that, from the standpoint of essence, “*being is illusion*” [*Das Sein ist das Schein*] (*WdL* II:19, *SL* 395, original emphasis).

³⁶ Quantity and Quality belong to the categories of the logic of being. Hegel writes, “ordinary consciousness [das gewöhnliche Bewußtsein] takes things up as simply being [seiende] and regards them in terms of quality, quantity, and measure.” (*EnzL*. §111Z)

Similarly, the way that capitalism *seems* to individuals is formed through the logic of being. Capitalism is necessarily a market economy. Individuals in market transactions are *equal* before the law and exchange commodities of *equal* value. Marx writes,

since they only exist for one another in exchange as equally worthy persons, as possessors of equivalent things, who thereby prove their equivalence, they are as equals at the same time also indifferent to one another. Whatever other individual distinction there may be does not concern them; they are indifferent to all their other individual peculiarities. (MEW 42:167-8, G: 242)³⁷

In market transactions, that is, individuals are self-subsistent atoms that remain external to the relation that makes them equal. Moreover, in market transactions individuals are *free*. The one does not appropriate the other's property by force or through violence, but by treating him as the owner of property who can dispose of it at his own *free* will. This is, however, only the way that capitalism *seems* to individuals, and that seeming is indeed an illusion. The freedom and equality obtained in exchange "appears as the surface process, beneath which, however, in the depths, entirely different processes go on, in which this seeming [scheinbar] equality and freedom disappear." (MEW 42:173, G 247) The truth is (1) that in capitalism individuals are inseparable from social relations, thereby *thoroughly* determined by them, and (2) that these social relations are relations of domination and inequality.

Recall that for Adorno ideology is false, but it is a falsity that is necessary and objective. To the extent that ideology is necessary and objective, ideology participates in truth. Thus, for Adorno, ideology is true and false at the same time. Exactly the same

³⁷ „Da sie nur so als Gleichgeltende, als Besitzer von Äquivalenten und Bewährer dieser Äquivalenz im Austausch füreinander sind, sind sie als Gleichgeltende zugleich Gleichgültige gegeneinander; ihr sonstiger individueller Unterschied geht sie nichts an; sie sind gleichgültig gegen alle ihre sonstigen individuellen Eigenheiten”.

structure holds in Hegel's conception of illusion or semblance. Semblance, for Hegel, is true in so far as it captures our intuitive awareness correctly, that is to say, insofar as it captures the surface-appearance correctly. Yet, semblance is ultimately false, since semblance is not self-standing, but it is always semblance *of* essence – semblance is only a moment of essence, and not the essence itself. The fact that individuals are distinct from each other, that individuals are bearers of certain qualities and quantities is true. Yet, the same true fact becomes false, when it is conceived in relation to the essence that grounds that fact. In truth, individuals and the qualities and quantities that they bear are the mere effect of the invisible deeper network of relationality of essence that constitutes them as individuals in the first place.³⁸

³⁸ The point that semblance for Hegel is both true and false makes my interpretation of semblance different from Theunissen (1978). Theunissen distinguishes two *distinct* senses of “untruth” [Unwahrheit] in Hegel: (1) one-sidedness [Einseitigkeit] or undevelopedness [Unentwickeltheit], and (2) semblance [Schein] (70-91). According to Theunissen, in the first sense, untruth is opposed to Hegel's dictum, “the True is the Whole”. In the second sense, untruth is opposed to “true actuality”, to Hegel's “what in truth is” [was in Wahrheit ist] (71). For Theunissen, untruth in the first sense is “the not-yet-developed” [das noch Unentwickelte], but in the second sense, it is “the thoroughly empty” [das völlig Leere]. From these definitions, Theunissen concludes that whereas the untruth qua not-yet-developed remains a part of truth, the untruth qua semblance does *not* participate in truth *at all* (72). The untruth of semblance, he emphasizes, is “complete” [vollständig], and “total” (72-3). (Theunissen's conception of semblance is wider than the category of semblance in the beginning of the logic of essence. He thinks that the whole objective logic must be considered as a unity of truth and semblance. Despite his wider usage, however, he asserts that Hegel's own category of semblance in the beginning of the logic of essence has the same characteristics as those of his wider conception of semblance (74)). I find Theunissen's distinction quite confusing – and simply wrong. It is quite unHegelian to think that there can be a kind of semblance that does not participate in truth at all. The central operator of “sublation” in Hegel's logic is exactly meant to show that the earlier categories don't simply get cancelled out, but they are to some extent preserved in the higher categories. This means, contrary to Theunissen, that semblance is not “total untruth”, but always a “partial untruth”. Theunissen seems to be aware of the unclear distinction that he makes, and later conceded that Hegel actually “blends” [vermengt] the two senses of untruth that Theunissen distinguishes (89). See also Yeomans (2012:47, footnote 10), who criticizes Theunissen on the same point. For a general

Thus, the simultaneous truth and falsity of being in essence implies that for Hegel, being in essence is not simply discarded away; being is rather preserved within essence – and it is preserved as a *necessary* moment of essence. The necessity of incorporation of being in essence accords to the general feature of Hegel’s dialectic, which he elsewhere expresses in the following way:

The *true* system [das *Wahre* System] cannot have the relation to the false [das Falsche] of being merely opposed to it [i.e. the false]; since, if this were so, the [true] system, as this opposite, would itself be one-sided. On the contrary, the *true* system as the higher must contain the subordinate [false] system within itself. [Vielmehr als das Höhere muß es das Untergeordnete in sich enthalten]. (*WdL* II:250, *SL* 580)

3-3- The Distinction between Semblance and Appearance

We learned that for Hegel *Schein* is what *seems* to be the case. There is an important distinction for Hegel between what *seems* to be the case and what *appears* to be the case. Hegel uses the term *Erscheinung* (appearance) to designate the latter. The distinction, of course, is not merely verbal, and it is sometimes difficult to cling to a fixed terminology to refer to these concepts. Both semblance and appearance denote the realm of positivity of essence, the way that essence *exists*. For Hegel, appearance is a much more determinate category than semblance. While Hegel *begins* the logic of essence with semblance, he discusses appearance much later in the logic of essence, namely, after the category of “ground [der Grund]. Semblance is the remaining of being in essence. It is a kind of *immediacy* that is not yet fully taken up by the mediating activity of essence. By

critical discussion of Theunissen’s conception of untruth, See (Fulda, Horstmann, Theunissen 1980:15ff).

contrast, appearance is a kind of immediacy that is *derived* from essence. In Hegel's words, appearance is "the essentiality that has *advanced to* immediacy" [die zur Unmittelbarkeit *fortgegangene* Wesenheit]; it is "a being that has come forth *from* negativity and inwardness" of essence [ein Herausgegangensein *aus* der Negativität und Innerlichkeit] (my emphases) (*WdL* II:124, *SL* 479).³⁹ This means that appearance is a kind of existence, which is fully mediated by, or generated through, the relationality of essence⁴⁰. As I will discuss in Chapter 3, appearance is a *totality*, which shows the *totality* of essence. But semblance shows only *some* aspects of essence, it shows only *those* aspects that are remaining from the immediacy of being. Whereas appearance *adequately* expresses essence, semblance qua surface-appearance, is a partial expression of essence. Thus, for Hegel, it is semblance, rather than appearance, that signifies ideology. Because of its constitutive partiality and incompleteness, there is both truth and falsity in semblance. Semblance shows something of essence, but at the very same time disguises essence. Hegel thus occasionally refers to semblance as a "mere appearance" [nur Erscheinung], as a kind of appearance that is "essenceless" [wesenlos] (*WdL* II:148, *SL* 499). By designating semblance as "essenceless", Hegel means that semblance is a kind of appearance that conveys that it independent of essence, although in truth it is thoroughly dependent on essence. In contrast to semblance, there is no falsity (in the relevant sense discussed here) in appearance qua Erscheinung; appearance manifests

³⁹ Hoffmann calls Erscheinung "the immanent positivity of essence; its positedness" (2012:330). In contrast, one can call Schein the "external positivity of essence."

⁴⁰ Compare to the following passage from the *Encyclopedia Logic*: "Appearance [Erscheinung] is in general the truth of being [i.e. of semblance] and a richer determination than the latter; insofar as appearance contains united in itself the moments of reflection-in-itself and reflection-in-another. In contrast to this, being or immediacy [of semblance] is still the one-sided absence of relation and (seemingly) resting only on itself." (*EnzL*. §131Z)

essence in the way that it actually is, in its full totality. Freedom and equality, as *false* and *partial* expressions of essence, are to be conceived as semblance that hides the essence of capitalism. But the tendency towards the lengthening of the working day, the incessant technological changes, the progressive mechanization of labor process, the mass unemployment, the destruction of nature, etc. are directly derived from the essence of capitalism, and thus belong to its appearance.⁴¹

4- The Dialectic of Semblance as the Critique of Ideology

I have indicated before that a critique of ideology, according to Marx and Adorno, is not merely judging that the ideology is false. Rather, a successful critique of ideology demands showing the *systematic* connection of ideology to the totality of social relations. The successful critique of ideology, additionally, needs to show how ideology has a certain *function* within the totality, i.e. how ideology contributes to self-maintenance and self-reproduction of the totality. By relating ideology to the totality, the critique of ideology, rather than being merely a moralizing or a psychologizing criticism, can scientifically explain (1) why people, in a given social totality, entertain the false beliefs as they do, and (2) why, despite the falsity of those beliefs, people *continue* to entertain those beliefs. In this section, I focus on the dialectical development of the category of semblance in the logic of essence. The dialectic of semblance has been the subject of extensive commentaries in the scholarship on Hegel⁴². In what follows, rather than

⁴¹ Marx's usage of the terms *Schein* and *Erscheinung* is not consistent, nor Hegel's own usage of the terms in his *Realphilosophie*. *Generally speaking*, however, they use the terms in the sense discussed above.

⁴² For a classical interpretation of this chapter, See (Theunissen 1978: 301-82). For a short, good, commentary in English See (Houlgate 2011).

offering another exhaustive commentary, I will reconstruct the dialectic of semblance from the point of view of the themes of ideology, totality and power. This, in effect, shows how the dialectic of semblance captures the general logic of the critique of ideology. More specifically, I also show how Hegel's conception specifically draws the logical contour of the critique of the ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism. I flesh out the details of such logic later through discussing Marx's social theory in the next section.

The dialectical development of semblance is in fact the dialectical development of the *relation* of the totality of essence to semblance. This dialectical development occurs through three successive stages: In the first stage, which Hegel captures through the categories of "the Essential and the Unessential" [das Wesentliche und das Unwesentliche], Hegel shows that semblance is not separable from essence (A). In the second stage, Hegel shows how semblance is "posited" by the totality of essence (B), and finally, in the third stage, which Hegel calls "reflection" [die Reflexion], Hegel shows how semblance is "posited" by essence as essence's own "presupposition" (C). (The letters are Hegel's.) Through A and B Hegel shows how semblance has a *systematic* connection with essence. Through C, Hegel shows how semblance has a *functional* connection with essence, namely, how essence requires semblance in order to reproduce itself.

(A) Semblance is not separable from essence.

The first and most intuitive way of thinking about essence and semblance is to think of essence as something hidden, which, so to speak, lies *underneath* semblance. This is a

kind of conception of essence that accords to the ordinary consciousness, whose mode of thinking is *pictorial*. The structure of reality, according to this conception, is bi-layered. The surface layer, what *seems* to us, is those qualities or determinations that are in truth not constitutive of reality – they are the Unessential [das Unwesentliche]. The deeper layer or the core is those invisible qualities and determinations that make reality what it is; they are the Essential [das Wesentliche].⁴³ According to this conception, the semblance (the Unessential) is a *false* appearance that is *separate* from the *true* essence (the Essential) of reality⁴⁴. In this way, according to Hegel,

Essence itself is an *existent* [*seiendes*] immediate essence, and being is only a negative *in relation* to essence; [essence is] not in and for itself; therefore, essence is a *determinate* negation. In this way, being and essence relate to each other again as *others*; for *each has a being, an immediacy*, and these are indifferent [gleichgültig] to each other, and with respect to this being, being and essence are equal in value [stehen diesem Sein nach in gleichem Werte] (*WdL* II:18, *SL* 394).

Conceptualizing the relation of essence and semblance in terms of the Essential and the Unessential is a “relapse” into the logic of being. Like something and other in the logic of being, here essence and semblance cannot define each other through the relation between them, and thus remain equal and indifferent to each other. Moreover – and this is another point – if we want to distinguish the Essential from the Unessential of reality, according

⁴³ As we will see, Hegel’s conception of the Essential and the Unessential is entirely *negative*. That is to say, his concern is to show how the relation between essence and semblance should *not* be understood. I capitalize the terms essential and unessential, whenever I specifically refer to these categories.

⁴⁴ This conception of essence and semblance (in its different aspects) appears in different traditions in the history of philosophy. For Plato, the sensible world (in the standard reading) is false and detachable from the true realm of ideas. For Locke, the “real essence” is the “real internal” upon which “discoverable qualities” of objects are anchored. (However, those discoverable qualities for Locke, strictly speaking, are not *false*.) (Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 3, Chapter 3, §15),

to Hegel, we end up with an *indeterminate* situation; since we cannot know what precisely the Essential is. The decision as to what to conceive as the Essential does not originate from objective reality itself. It rather falls upon our mere subjective attitude, such that “the same content can sometimes be regarded as the Essential and sometimes as the Unessential” (*WdL* II:19, *SL* 395).

The indeterminacy of the relation of the Essential to the Unessential shows that it is wrong to conceive semblance as separable from essence. It shows *via negativa* that they thoroughly interpenetrate each other. This means that although we can use the *pictorial* metaphors of core/surface, center/periphery, inner/outer, background/foreground to describe the relation of essence and semblance in the *natural* language – as both Hegel and Marx frequently do – we should be fully aware that the metaphor is misleading and distorts the *conceptual* truth of the total imbrication of the two⁴⁵. Thus, when Rosa Luxemburg in her pamphlet on the Russian Revolution writes, “we have always revealed the hard kernel of social inequality and lack of freedom hidden under the sweet shell of formal equality and freedom” (Luxemburg: 220), we should not take her claim quite *literally*; as if she meant that the “sweet shell” of ideology or semblance can be removed from the “hard kernel” of essence of capitalism through some enlightened reasoning. Rather, we should read her, in the same way that Adorno conceives ideology, when he writes, “ideology does not overlay the social being like a detachable layer, but is inherent in it” (*GS* 6:348). In capitalism, equality and domination are indissolubly bound with each other such that it is not possible to have the one without the other. This means that freedom and equality in capitalism only obtain by virtue of domination and inequality,

⁴⁵ “To imagine show [Schein] as a veil thinly hiding a bright light involves precisely the wrong metaphor. The moment of being in which essence shows is within essence.” (Mure 1950:93)

inasmuch as the capitalist system of domination can only exist by virtue of providing freedom and equality.⁴⁶

(B) *Semblance is posited by essence.*

The result of the dialectic of the Essential and the Unessential is to show that it is wrong to understand essence as simply *excluding* being or semblance. In (B), Hegel conceives essence as a *totality* that *contains* – and not *excludes* – semblance. Semblance is not any more something that subsists side-by-side with essence, but it is conceived solely as *semblance of essence*. Being or semblance “is not free”, Hegel now emphasizes, “but is present *only* as related with its [i.e essence’s] unity” (*WdL*: II:15, *SL* 391, my emphasis). That is to say, semblance does not exist on its own; but it is thoroughly dominated by essence.

Hegel’s conception of essence as a totality is curious, in that he is equally committed to the two following contradictory claims: (1) the claim that essence is a totality that does not allow any otherness of being or semblance; (2) the claim that being or semblance retains some sort of otherness to essence. Instead of shying away from this contradiction, Hegel emphatically *defines* semblance in terms of contradiction:

⁴⁶ One could argue that the antebellum US South was in fact a capitalist economy, yet based on slavery. Thus, the domination in capitalism is not necessarily bound up with freedom and equality. There are two points to be made against this objection: (1) The society of antebellum US South, to use Hegel’s jargon, was not “adequate” to the concept of capitalism, and thus it inevitably perished. Even from the economic point of view, the institution of slavery was not sustainable within a capitalist world. (2) Slavery in the South could exist in the first place, because it was thoroughly dependent on highly developed capitalist markets in the North and in Europe. (The cotton produced in plantations was not for the consumption of slaveholders, but for selling to capitalist textile industries.) The antebellum US South, thus, was an exception, which only proves the rule.

Being is semblance. The being of semblance consists solely in the sublatedness of being, in its nothingness; this nothingness it has in essence and apart from its nothingness, apart from essence, semblance is not. It is the negative posited as the negative. [*Das Sein ist Schein. Das Sein des Scheins besteht allein in dem Aufgehobensein des Seins, in seiner Nichtigkeit; diese Nichtigkeit hat es im Wesen, und außer seiner Nichtigkeit, außer dem Wesen ist er nicht. Er ist das Negative gesetzt als Negatives.*] (*WdL* II:19, *SL* 395)

For Hegel, being or semblance functions as the other of essence, but this other is not “true”: “here we have no true other” [kein wahrhaft Anderes] (*EnzL*. §111Z), he writes. Being or semblance *is*, but not as something that *is*; rather as something that *is not*. Its mode of *existence*, therefore, is that of *non-existence*. It exists, but not as something *positive*; rather as something *sublated* or *negated* in essence. Hegel calls semblance “the inherently null” [das an sich Nichtige] (*WdL* II:21, *SL* 397). The nullity of semblance is not the nullity of complete absence of determination⁴⁷. Rather, it is a nullity that results from the inherently unstable character of semblance⁴⁸, from the simultaneity of its being related and not related to essence.

I have already indicated that Hegel is fully committed to the law of non-contradiction in the traditional logic. Rather, as I will show in Chapter 2, Hegel’s dialectical contradiction results from the necessary coherence of two mutually excluding moments constituting an entity.⁴⁹ Semblance consists of two moments: A moment of being that exists independently of essence, *and* a moment of being that is fully taken up

⁴⁷ Such conception of nullity is already discarded in the very first pages of the book in the dialectic of being-nothing-becoming.

⁴⁸ Pippin calls the determinacy of semblance the “vanishing determinacy” (1989:203).

⁴⁹ For different, powerful interpretations of the speculative contradiction in Hegel, see Wolff (1981), Pippin (1978), Höle (1987:156ff), Wandschneider (1995), and Horstmann (1984: esp. 80ff).

by essence, and is therefore dependent on it. These two moments exclude each other; yet Hegel insists that it is exactly the unity of the two that makes semblance what it is. One should not try to solve this contradiction by denying one of the contradictory moments, or by conceiving of the contradictory entity as simply and purely non-existent, or by trying to transform the contradictory entity into other entities, but one should simply “grasp and assert the contradiction” [Auffassen und Aussprechen des Widerspruchs] (*WdL* II:77, *SL* 441). In his exposition of the concept of contradiction in the *Science of Logic*, Hegel insists,

Speculative thought consists only [nur] in holding firm [festhält] to contradiction and to itself in the contradiction, but not in the sense that, as it happens in ordinary thought, it would let itself be ruled by it and allow it to dissolve [auflösen] its determinations into just other determinations or into nothing (*WdL* II:76, *SL* 440, underline mine).⁵⁰

As the structure of Hegel’s contradiction shows, Hegel is emphatically against conceiving contradiction as a *middle term* or a *mean* between two opposing determinations⁵¹. It is *not* the case that semblance is *partially* determined by essence, and is *partially not* determined by essence. Hegel is unequivocal on this point, when he writes, “being *in its totality* has withdrawn into essence” [*Das Sein ist in seiner Totalität in das Wesen*

⁵⁰ I have used Georg Di Giovanni’s translation with slight modification (*The Science of Logic*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.383)

⁵¹ Adorno had especially a keen eye on this point in Hegel’s philosophy, a point that he expresses in various contexts. According to Adorno, the conception of mediation that regards it as a “mean” between two extremes belongs to the ancient philosophy, specifically to Aristotle’s. This gets especially articulated in Aristotle’s ethical theory that regards virtue as a mean (properly understood) between two extremes (e.g. courage being a mean between cowardice and rashness). Logically speaking, mediation in this case is a *separate* thing that occurs in the space *between* the two extremes. According to Adorno, Aristotle did not have a proper conception of “dialectical” mediation, which relates and thereby constitutes the two extremes in their very extremity. (*NS-V* 14:70ff, esp. S.75). See also (*NS-V* 2:264-5). Whether or not Hegel himself would agree with Adorno’s reading of Aristotle is not my concern here.

zurückgegangen.] (*WdL* II:21, *SL* 397, my emphasis). If we conceive being or semblance as being determined or dominated by essence *in some respect*, and as being free from the determination or domination of essence *in some other respect*, there will be again a “relapse” into the relation of the Essential and the Unessential. Such relation conceives of essence and semblance as *excluding* each other, and cannot thereby be adequately determinate. The moment of existence of semblance, and the moment of non-existence of semblance cohere with each other; they do not get *watered down* to a *partial* existence, and a *partial* non-existence. This logical point is extremely important in understanding the relation of domination and equality in capitalism, and I discuss it later.

Hegel’s term for describing the relation of essence to semblance is “positing” [Setzen]. He writes, “semblance is essence’s own positing” (*WdL* II:17, *SL* 393). That essence posits semblance means that essence *generates* or *produces* semblance⁵². Semblance cannot exist untouched by or indifferent to essence, since it is already generated by essence⁵³. Indeed, the act of positing distinguishes the logic of essence from the logic of being. In the logic of being, neither of the two individuals (something and an other) generates the other. Each can exist independently of the other and there is a relation of equality between them. It is first the act of positing in the logic of essence that establishes the asymmetrical relation of domination; since the posited (semblance) for its very existence is dependent upon the positing (essence). At this stage, the relation of domination seems to be one-way, one in which the dominated (semblance) does not exert

⁵² Pinkard even suggests that Setzen can be translated in English as “generate” or “produce” (Pinkard 1988:195). Also See Hegel’s own definition of “positing” in the *Nürenberge Logik*: “Insofar as the act [of essence] is a difference of essence from itself, through which being or determinacy is *produced* [*hervorgebracht*], the act is positing” (*WW* 4:17, my emphasis).

⁵³ In Klaus Hartmann’s terms, semblance is not a *mere oppositum* to essence, but an “innerwesensmäßiges Oppositum” – an oppositum that is internal to essence (1999: 170).

any effect on the dominating (essence). However, in (C) Hegel further develops his conception of domination, in order to show that there is indeed a *reciprocal* relation between the dominating (essence) and the dominated (semblance). I discuss this conception below.

(C) Semblance is posited by essence as essence's own presupposition.

Hegel's conception of essence and of its relation to semblance is peculiar in the history of philosophy. This peculiarity is articulated in "reflection". I have explained before that the logic of essence is characterized by two themes: (1) It is the ontology of absolute relationality. (2) It is the ontology of domination. In reflection Hegel interweaves these two themes and articulates them in their unity. Hegel's exposition of "reflection" in the *Science of Logic* is pivotal to his philosophy in general. In this section, I do not aim to show the systematic significance of reflection. I limit myself to explaining how reflection captures the relation of essence to semblance⁵⁴.

Reflection is of course a loaded term in the history of philosophy, and even in Hegel's philosophy it has different significance in different periods of his thought. We need to be aware of the specific meaning that Hegel gives to it in the logic of essence. We tend to naturally believe that reflection is the subjective activity of thinking that takes the

⁵⁴ For the classical interpretation of the chapter of reflection, See (Henrich 1978). Two brief but helpful expositions are the following: (1) Longuenesse (2007:52ff). She discusses reflection in the context of Hegel's conception of contradiction. (2) Rose (2009: 205ff). She relates Hegel's reflection in the logic of essence to Fichte's concept of Tathandlung. Also, the chapter of reflection is productively appropriated (3) to explain the structure of agency in Hegel's practical philosophy (Yeomans 2012:36-64), (4) to evaluate metaphysical import of Hegel's logic in general (Moyar: 2012), and (5) to discuss the relation of spirit and nature in Hegel (Quante: 2002).

objective world for granted, and *then* comes to scene to reflect on it. However, the subjective reflection for Hegel counts only as an insufficient form of reflection, as “external [äußere] reflection”. The “external reflection”, according to Hegel, “starts from something immediately given which is alien to it, regarding itself as a merely formal activity which receives content and material from outside and which, by itself, is only the movement conditioned by that content and material”. According to Hegel, reducing the concept of reflection in general to external reflection has legitimately put the concept in disrepute and has made it seem to be “polar opposite and hereditary foe of the absolute method of philosophizing” (*WdL* II:31, *SL* 405). Hegel attempts to save the concept of reflection from this reduction, and programmatically avers: “But what is under discussion here [i.e. in Hegel’s own logic] is neither reflection at the level of consciousness, nor the more specific reflection of the Understanding...but of reflection in general [Reflexion überhaupt]” (*WdL* II:30, *SL* 404)⁵⁵. The problem with external reflection is that it takes reflection to be within thinking subject, to be external to the constitution of object itself. In contrast, for Hegel reflection is *constitutive* of the object; it makes the object what it is. More precisely, reflection is the very basic relation that constitutes essence as essence.

In the logic of being, we learned that relation obtains between self-subsistent *things*, which can exist *apart* from the relation. In the logic of essence, reflection obtains between essence and semblance, which are constituted by reflection. As essence is defined in terms of *relation* of domination, and being in terms of *relation* of equality, reflection therefore is a *relation* obtaining between *relations*; it is thus a second-order relation. “Reflection is the *pure mediation* as such” [die Reflexion ist die *reine*

⁵⁵ For a helpful discussion about the concept of “reflection in general” or simply “reflection” and its difference from subjective reflection, see (Jaeschke: 1978).

Vermittlung überhaupt] (*WdL* II:81, *SL* 445, Hegel's emphasis); namely, a kind of mediation which mediates between two forms of mediation.⁵⁶

What is specific to “reflection” as a mode of relation that constitutes essence? In the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel relates his conception of reflection to light when it hits a mirror. The light ray exists one time as forward-going, and the same light ray exists another time as backward-going (*EnzL.* §112Z). What this simile shows of reflection is its *recursivity*. The relation of essence and semblance is always two-ways. Essence posits semblance, but through this positing, it constitutes itself as essence. In other words, there is a relation of essence to semblance, which then reflects back from semblance to essence, and makes essence what it is. Hegel uses different expressions to convey the recursivity of the reflection constituting essence: “The return of essence is ...its self-repulsion from itself” [Die Rückkehr des Wesens ist....sein Sich-Abstoßen von sich selbst.] (*WdL* II:27, *SL* 401). “Its [i.e. reflection's] self-repelling is the coming-to-itself” [Ihr Abstoßen von sich ist das Ankommen bei sich selbst.] (*WdL* II:27, *SL* 402). The relation of essence to its other is “bent back” unto itself (*WdL* II:34, *SL* 407). And: “The reflective movement is to be taken as an *absolute recoil* [*absoluter Gegenstoß*] upon itself” (*WdL* II:26, *SL* 402). As all these formulations indicate, essence for Hegel is not a neo-Platonic pre-mediated One that *emanates* itself into the *seeming* world, but essence is nothing but the very relation between essence and semblance, which *recursively* constitutes essence. The reflexive

⁵⁶ “Absolute Reflexion ist als eine Rückkehr zu oder in sich definiert, die nichts ist als dies, also ein Prozeß, dem kein Substrat zugrunde liegt.” (Theunissen 1978: 305)

structure of reflection makes essence a *self-grounding* category⁵⁷. Essence relates to semblance, and in so doing it grounds itself as essence.

In (B), we learned that Hegel conceives essence to be “positing” semblance. Hegel now shows that such conception is inadequate; since any act of producing or generating *requires* some materials with which it can produce or generate. In other words, any act of “positing” is at the same time an act of “presupposing”. Hegel’s conception of essence is peculiar in that he wants to show that essence uses or requires (“presupposes”) the very *same* material that it produces (“posits”). That is, what essence posits [Setzen] is the same as that which it has already in-advance-positied [*Voraussetzen*].

In order to articulate that essence’s positing semblance and essence’s presupposing of semblance coincide, Hegel introduces three forms of reflection, what he calls (1) the “positing” [setzende] (2) the “external” [äußere] and (3) the “determining” [bestimmende] reflection. It is the third one that adequately expresses reflection, and the first two are one-sided abstractions from it. Hegel’s exposition of reflection is particularly cumbersome.⁵⁸ But his general point is clear. (1) In “positing” reflection, essence is conceived to be creating semblance; but it is *forgotten* that in such creation essence already requires semblance. Essence is regarded therefore to be *independent* of semblance. Correspondingly, semblance is regarded to be a *mere* seeming, a *mere* illusion, that does not have any objective existence. (2) In “external” reflection semblance is conceived to be primary. It is *forgotten* that semblance is not self-standing; but is generated by essence. External reflection is the conceptual articulation of ideological

⁵⁷ The structure of essence that I called “self-grounding”, Pinkard designates as “self-subsuming”: “Hegel’s talk of essence’s ‘return into self’ refers to the self-subsuming character of essence.” (1988:58)

⁵⁸ For the classical interpretation of the chapter of reflection, see (Henrich 1978).

“intuitive” thinking that clings to semblance, and ignores or forgets the genesis of semblance. In other words, external reflection or ideological “intuitive” thinking treats semblance merely as *given*, and not as mediated by essence. (3) According to Hegel, “the determining reflection is the unity of *positing* and *external* reflection” (*WdL* II:32, *SL* 404). The recursive structure of essence obtains in the determining reflection. Essence and semblance are now thoroughly related to each other. Essence produces semblance, but at the same time it is dependent on it; since it is only through relating to semblance that it can constitute itself as essence. We can depict the three forms of reflection with the following schema:

Positing Reflection: (*essence*-semblance)

External Reflection: (*essence-semblance*)

Determining Reflection: (*essence-semblance*) – (*essence-semblance*)⁵⁹

The determining reflection adequately formulates the structure of domination in essence. In contrast to positing reflection, the relation of domination of essence over semblance is not one-way or immediate. Domination in determining reflection rather obtains by virtue of incorporating a moment of external reflection, i.e. a moment of essence equally determined by semblance. In determining reflection, there is a reciprocity between essence and semblance; but such reciprocity is eventually an illusion – though an objective illusion – since it is *ultimately* essence that determines semblance. In other words, there is a *symmetrical* mutual determination of essence and semblance, but such

⁵⁹ As the *recursive* structure of determining reflection shows, Hegel is emphatically *against* understanding determining reflection as simply a *mean* between two extremes of positing and external reflection. It is not the case that essence *partially* posits semblance (positing reflection), such that semblance *partially* retains an independent status from essence (external reflection). In contrast, the structure of determining reflection shows that the two opposites of essence and semblance do not get reduced to a middle position, but they are constitutively related to each other in their very polar opposition.

symmetry only exists within the framework of the *asymmetrical* relation of essence and semblance.⁶⁰

In conclusion of our discussion of the dialectic of semblance, let us now consider the implications of Hegel's dialectical argument in (B) and (C) regarding the structure of the ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism. I would like to emphasize three points: *First*, Hegel's argument shows that the structure of ideology is *contradictory*. Equality and freedom exist in capitalism, but not as something given that can exist on their own, but as something *sublated* or *negated* within the relations of domination of essence. Thus, the following two groups of people, in their very one-sidedness, are wrong: (a) Those libertarians or liberals who think capitalism is primarily a system of equality and freedom, and who deny that equality and freedom are *generated* through the essence of domination. (Their attitude is that of external reflection). (b) Those Marxists who think there is no freedom or equality in capitalism, and freedom and equality are merely some sham ideas that the ruling class has fabricated and propagated to keep the workers at bay. (Their attitude is that of positing reflection). *Second*, it shows that it is wrong to think equality and freedom are *partially* determined through the essence of domination, and partially *escape* from the determination of essence, such that there is a moment of freedom and equality for individuals in capitalism that is immune to the relations of domination. Rather, equality and freedom are *completely* taken up by the relations of domination, such that they solely function as a *moment* of the essence of

⁶⁰ The language of symmetry/asymmetry is not perfectly apt to essence, and Hegel himself does not use such phrases in the logic of essence. The terms symmetry and asymmetry might suggest that the entities between which symmetry or asymmetry obtains are self-standing and can exist apart from the said relations. This is of course not what it is at stake in the logic of essence. Hegel uses instead the language of "interiorization" [Erinnerung] of semblance by essence. The choice of words notwithstanding, reflection has the structure that I described above.

domination. In other words, equality and freedom in capitalism only help the system of domination sustain itself. *Third*, the relation of domination in capitalism is not something *natural* or *given* but obtains through mediation of the relation of equality. More precisely, the essence of domination is nothing other than the relational structure that obtains between domination and equality, and recursively constitutes domination. The essence of domination *requires* (“presupposes”) equality for its function, but at the same time domination *produces* (“posits”) the required equality. This means that the structure of domination in capitalism is *self-grounding*; it does not need any appeal to any *external* or *given* authority, be it nature (as in ancient Greece) or God (as in medieval times) for its ground.

5- The Logical Structure of Ideology in the Philosophy of Right

I have discussed Hegel’s conception of semblance in the logic, and have thereby shown that semblance in the logic captures the structure of ideology. Now, I would like to briefly address Hegel’s own conception of ideology in his social philosophy, and especially to look at its logical structure. To clarify from the outset, although I argue that Hegel’s conception of semblance in the logic expresses Marx’s conception of ideology of freedom and equality in capitalism, nonetheless, I do not intend to suggest that Hegel’s conception of ideology in the *Philosophy of Right* is the same as Marx’s.⁶¹ Yet, I believe, *from the logical point of view* there are certain similarities between the two.

Hegel does not use the term “ideology” in the *Philosophy of Right*, but his conception of “public opinion” [öffentliche Meinung] comes very close to what can now

⁶¹ See the Introduction to the dissertation for my take on the *Philosophy of Right*.

be regarded as ideology.⁶² In the following passage, Hegel both defines what he means by “public opinion,” and lays bare its fundamental logical structure:

Formal subjective freedom, whereby individuals as such entertain and express their *own* judgments, opinions, and counsels on matters of universal concern, makes its collective appearance in what is known as *public opinion*. In the latter, the universal in and for itself, the *substantial* and the *true*, is linked with its opposite, with what is *distinct* in itself [dem für sich *Eigentümlichen*] as the particular opinions of the many. This existence [of public opinion] is therefore a manifest self-contradiction, an *appearance* of cognition; in it, the essential is just as immediately present as the inessential. [diese Existenz ist daher der vorhandene Widerspruch ihrer selbst, das Erkennen als *Erscheinung*; die Wesentlichkeit ebenso unmittelbar als die Unwesentlichkeit.] (*GPR* §316)

Public opinion for Hegel is analogous to what can be grasped nowadays by various sorts of polls; that is, a kind of collective data that is obtained through asking individual people of their opinion about a specific issue. According to Hegel, public opinion is the result of “all the contingencies of opinion, with its ignorance and perverseness, its false knowledge and its errors of judgment” (*GPR* §317), and for that reason, it can be equated with ideology. Although Hegel does assert that public opinion or ideology is rampant with falsity, he does not regard it as pure falsity. Rather, he defines it in terms of “a manifest self-contradiction” (*GPR* §316) in which “simultaneously...truth and endless error are closely united within it.” (*GPR* §317) Recall that for Hegel there is both falsity and truth in the category of semblance in the logic. Semblance is false insofar as it is conceived to be self-subsistent. It is true insofar as it is conceived to be a constitutive moment of

⁶² Cf. Adorno’s exposition of Hegel’s conception of “public opinion” (*NS-V* 6: 162ff). For a general discussion of Hegel’s conception of public opinion in the context of other thinkers of the period in Germany, See (Liesegang: 2004)

essence. Here we see a similar logical structure at work.⁶³ Public opinion is false, but it is a kind of falsity that at the same time participates in truth. Public opinion is false, insofar as it is “distinct” from the “substantial” basis of the society, from its essence, and because of this inevitable dissociation, it can and does contain blatant errors. The institutional structure of society, i.e. the “substantial”, is logically independent from public opinion, and cannot be known through it, rather “it can be known only in and from itself” [nur aus und für sich] (*GPR* §317). However – and this is why public opinion is contradictory – although public opinion *seems* to be *independent* of the substantial, it nevertheless *depends* on it. It therefore can manifest, although in a distorted form, “the true needs and legitimate tendencies of actuality” [die wahrhaften Bedürfnisse und richtigen Tendenzen der Wirklichkeit] (§317).

In the interpretation of Marx that I have offered, ideology is not primary the subjective opinions of individuals, rather; ideology is embodied within the essential legal, social and political institutions. It is for this reason that ideology for Marx is *socially necessary*, and thus those “contingencies of opinion, with its ignorance and perverseness, its false knowledge and its errors of judgment” (Hegel’s phrase) cannot count, for Marx, as ideology. However, there is a deeper sense that Hegel and Marx come close to each other. That is the sense when we disregard the *content* of public opinion, namely, *what* people in fact believe or say, and instead consider the fact *that* people, in modernity, can believe or say whatever comes to their mind. According to Hegel, the principle of

⁶³ The term that Hegel uses in the above quote of §316 is *Erscheinung*, and not *Schein*. Hegel does not use the logical terms in his *Realphilosophie* quite consistently. From his analysis of public opinion, it is obvious that he is in fact speaking about *Schein*, not *Erscheinung*. Similarly, the terms essential and inessential in the block quote above does not refer to the categories of the logic that Hegel discusses in the dialectical development of semblance in (A).

subjective freedom of individuals is constitutive of – and therefore socially necessary in – modernity. An individual in modern times is entitled to entertain his *own* ideas – even if they are blatantly false – and accordingly, he is entitled to be recognized by others for having such ideas. This makes public opinion an essential part of the social structure in modernity, an essential part that cannot be ignored. Thus, Hegel concludes,

Public opinion therefore deserves to be *respected* [*geachtet*] as well as *despised* [*verachtet*] – despised for its concrete consciousness and expression, and respected for its essential basis, which appears [*scheint*] in that concrete consciousness only in a more or less obscure manner. (*GPR* §318)

6- The Logical Structure of Marx's Critique of the Ideology of Equality and Freedom in Capitalism

In this section, my aim is to show that Marx's conception of the ideology or semblance [*Schein*] of equality and freedom, in terms of its logical structure, has a close affinity to Hegel's semblance in the logic of essence. Importantly, Marx, for all his contempt for schematic thinking, never facilely *applies* Hegelian logical categories to political economy; rather, he carves out a mode of dialectic that is *immanent* to the specific subject matter that he is dealing with. In the case of illusion or semblance, as far as I can verify, he never makes *any* reference to the Hegel's category in the logic. Yet, as his dialectical conception in general is greatly influenced by Hegel, it is not surprising to observe the structural homology between the two. In what follows, first, I discuss that the basis of Marx's critique of political economy is the ontological distinction between essence and semblance (5-1). I will then explain Marx's critique of the ideology of equality and freedom by showing how the ideology of equality and freedom is systematically and

functionally related to the totality of capital. I will also show how Marx's dialectical critique of ideology of equality and freedom accords to the dialectical development of the category of semblance in the logic of essence, from (A) to (B), to (C), as I discussed in section 3 (5-2).

6-1- Marx's Critique of Ideology as the Critique of Semblance

It is not an exaggeration to claim that Marx's economic theory – in its entirety – is based on the ontological distinction between what *seems* to be the case and what is *actually* the case, i.e. between surface-appearance and essence. It is indeed on the basis of the distinction between surface-appearance and essence that Marx criticizes (a) vulgar economy [Vulgärökonomie], and (b) classical political economy [klassische politische Ökonomie]. Marx regards vulgar economists (Bastiat, Say, Senior, etc) as pure ideologues of capitalism. By contrast, while criticizing classical political economists (Petty, Smith, Ricardo), Marx regards them as committed to scientific investigation, thereby deserving due attention. (a) Regarding vulgar economics, Marx writes,

Vulgar economics indeed does nothing more than interpret, systematize and turn into apologetics the intuitive awareness of agents trapped within bourgeois relations of production. [Die Vulgärökonomie tut in der Tat nichts, als die Vorstellungen der in den bürgerlichen Produktionsverhältnissen befangenen Agenten dieser Produktion doktrinär zu verdolmetschen, zu systematisieren und zu apologetisieren]. (MEW 25:825, C III: 956)

For vulgar political economy, the surface-appearance of capitalism – i.e. the way that capitalism immediately appears to individuals, and thus forms their beliefs – is all that there is to capitalism. There is no essence to be further investigated. Thus, what remains to vulgar political economy, according to Marx, is only a “pedantic systematization” of

the surface-appearance of society into more or less consistent theory (*MEW* 23:95, *C I*: 175). Vulgar political economy effectively counts, in the strict sense of the word, as pure ideology; since it takes what people believe at face value, and does not question further their validity.⁶⁴

(b) In contrast to vulgar economy that denies that there is any essence at all, Marx credits the classical political economy with a genuine interest in investigation of “the inner framework of bourgeois relations of production” [den innern Zusammenhang der bürgerlichen Produktionsverhältnisse]. Thus, to the extent that classical political economy does not confine itself to “the merely apparent framework” [scheinbarer Zusammenhang] and seeks to penetrate to the “inner framework” of capitalism, it is indeed science (*MEW* 23:95, *C I*: 174).⁶⁵ According to Marx, the problem with the classical political economy is not that it is not committed to investigating the essence behind the veil of semblance. The problem is rather that – because of the empiricist framework classical political economy deploys – “even its best representatives remained more or less trapped in the world of semblance their own criticism had dissolved.” (*MEW* 25:838, *C III*:969). According to Marx, had classical political economy been able to abandon its empiricism, it would have been able to recognize that the surface-appearance of capitalism is not only *different* from the essence of capitalism, but indeed distorts and falsifies that essence – hence, Marx’s own usage of the term “semblance”

⁶⁴ “The vulgar economists confine themselves to systematizing in a pedantic way, and proclaiming for everlasting truths, the banal and complacent beliefs held by the bourgeois agents of production about their own world [die banalen und selbstgefälligen Vorstellungen der bürgerlichen Produktionsagenten], which is to them the best possible one.” (*MEW* 23: 95, *C I*:175)

⁶⁵ Cf. Also with the following passage: “All science would be superfluous, if the outward appearance of things and the essence of things immediately coincided.” (*MEW* 23:825, *C III*: 956).

[Schein] to describe the surface-appearance of capitalism.⁶⁶ Marx emphasizes,

The finished shape of economic relations [in capitalism], as these are visible on the surface, in their real existence, and therefore also in the intuitive awareness with which the bearers and agents of these relations seek to gain an understanding of them, is very different from the shape of their inner core, which is essential but concealed, and the concept corresponding to it. *It is in fact the very reverse and antithesis of this.* (MEW 25:219, C III: 311, my emphasis)⁶⁷

Note how Marx emphasizes that the surface-appearance in capitalism is not only “very different” from essence, but also, it is the exactly the “reverse and antithesis” [verkehrt, gegensätzlich] of what is essentially the case. This point is poignantly clear in the case of ideas of equality and freedom. In capitalism, individuals entertain the belief that they are equal and free; yet they are, in fact, unequal and unfree. The false belief of individuals in equality and freedom, however, is not an arbitrary subjective error that does not need to be explained. Rather, the ideology of equality and freedom is objective – it is socially necessary, it “arises from the very relations of production” (MEW 23:559, C I:667). The task of critique of ideology for Marx is not simply judging that people are not free and equal, but in *explaining* how such belief in equality and freedom, while being false, is nonetheless necessary.

⁶⁶ Note that Marx does not make a historically invariant claim that in all social formations the surface-appearance is false; he rather makes a *historical* claim that it is *in capitalism* that surface-appearance is illusory.

⁶⁷ “Die fertige Gestalt der ökonomischen Verhältnisse, wie sie sich auf der Oberfläche zeigt, in ihrer realen Existenz, und daher auch in den Vorstellungen, worin die Träger und Agenten dieser Verhältnisse sich über dieselben klarzuwerden suchen, sind sehr verschieden von, und in der Tat verkehrt, gegensätzlich zu ihrer innern, wesentlichen, aber verhüllten Kerngestalt und dem ihr entsprechenden Begriff.”

6-2- The “Inexorable Overturning” of Equality and Freedom into Inequality and Domination in capitalism

In this part, I give a short account of Marx’s economic theory, insofar as it relates to the ideology of equality and freedom in capitalism. The account given here will be further complemented with my detailed discussion of the totality of capital in Chapter 4.

According to Marx, *the* defining feature of capitalism – what distinguishes capitalism from the previous modes of production – is the institution of wage-labor. The relation of wage-labor at the same time is the very source of the semblance of equality and freedom in capitalism. Marx writes:

We understand the decisive importance of the transformation of the value and price of labor-power into the form of wages. All the notions of justice held by both the worker and the capitalist, all the mystifications of the capitalist mode of production, all capitalism’s illusions about freedom, all apologetic tricks of vulgar economics, have as their basis this form of appearance, which makes the actual relation invisible, and indeed presents to the eye the precise opposite of that relation (*MEW* 23:562 , *C* I:680).

Marx analyses the relation of wage-labor in two consecutive stages: (1) insofar as it occurs in the realm of the market, or what he calls the sphere of “circulation” of commodities. The transactions made in the market are that aspect of capitalism that is *visible* to individuals; and (2) insofar as it occurs as a moment of the *totality* of economy, which includes – in addition to the sphere of circulation – the sphere of “production” of commodities. For Marx, the totality of economy is “capital” itself, which is a *relational* structure that is *invisible* to the individuals, and can be understood only through analysis.

(1) Labor contracts are made in the sphere of circulation or the market. The worker sells the commodity that he possesses, i.e. his “labor-power”⁶⁸, to the capitalist, for which he receives a wage. In capitalism, the worker is free, in the sense that he can alienate his labor-power and sell it, in exchange for a wage, to whomever he wants. Moreover, the transaction between the capitalist and the worker exactly follows – Marx never gets tired of emphasizing – the general law of exchange of *equivalents*. The capitalist pays the *full* value of labor-power, and this involves *no* cheating.⁶⁹ Marx concedes that “the sphere of circulation is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of freedom, [and] equality” (*MEW* 23:189, *C I*: 280). The freedom and equality obtained through market transactions are real and objective. Yet Marx identifies them – and indeed the whole market – with “pure semblance” [reiner Schein]. The market, he writes, is “the phenomenon of a process taking place behind it.” (*MEW* 42:180, *G*: 255). The process taking place behind is the process of production of commodities.

(2) Labor-power is a *special* commodity. Its use-value, its consumption, is the actual process of labor, which constitutes the sphere of production. In the process of

⁶⁸ There is an important distinction in Marx’s analysis between “labor-power” [Arbeitskraft] and “labor” [Arbeit]. What the worker sells to the capitalist is his “labor-power,” which is his “capacity to labor” [Arbeitsvermögen], not his actual “labor”. Once the worker has sold his “labor-power”, he sets it into motion in the sphere of production, which results in “labor”. For Marx, labor is not at all a commodity that can be sold or exchanged. He writes, “labor is the substance, and the immanent measure of value, but it has no value itself.” (*MEW* 23:559, *C I*:677) (See Heinrich (2006: 257), Iber (2005: 122)). The distinction between labor-power and labor is one of theoretical innovations of Marx, and is meant, as we will see, to show how production of *surplus*-value does not violate the law of exchange of *equivalents*. In other words, it is meant to explain how equality is objective, and at the same time consistently coheres with inequality.

⁶⁹The value of *labor-power* is determined through the value embodied in the products that the worker *consumes* in his life, such as food, clothing, shelter, car, computer, etc. It does not have anything to do with the value that the worker *produces* for the capitalist through his actual *labor*. That happens in the sphere of production.

production, the worker through his labor produces *more* value than the value that he has been paid for. Marx divides the working day (say, 10 hours) into two parts. The first part during which a value equal to the value of labor-power (say, 4 hours) is produced, he calls the “necessary labor”. Any work that is done beyond the necessary labor, he calls “surplus labor” (here, 6 hours) (*MEW* 23:231, *C I*: 325). As the production of surplus-value is a *necessary* feature of capitalism, there *must* always be surplus-labor. Indeed, the *sole* reason that the capitalist hires the worker is for the latter’s surplus-labor. This means that, seen *from the viewpoint of the totality* of economy, there is no exchange of *equivalents*, and the exchange of equivalents in the sphere of circulation has been only a semblance:

This exchange of equivalents proceeds; it is only the surface layer of a production, which rests on the appropriation of alien labor *without exchange*, but with *the semblance [Schein] of exchange*. This system of exchange rests on *capital* as its basis, and when it is regarded in isolation from capital, as it appears on the surface, as a *self-subsistent* system, then it is a mere *illusion [Schein]*, but a *necessary illusion [ein notwendiger Schein]*. There is no longer any ground for astonishment that the system of exchange values – exchange of equivalents measured through labor – turns into, or rather reveals as its hidden background the *appropriation of alien labor without exchange*, complete separation of labor and property. (*MEW* 42: 417, *G* 509)

The extraction of surplus-labor is not specific to capitalism. In all class societies, a group of people must work more than what is necessary for their subsistence. What is specific to capitalism, though, is the specific *form* that the extraction of surplus-labor takes on. In capitalism, the extraction of surplus-labor has to be *always* mediated through the semblance of equality obtained in the market. This equality is false, but it is a falsity that is objective.

(A) Equality is not separable from domination.

For Hegel equality and domination, or the semblance and essence are thoroughly interpenetrated with each other, and it is not possible to dissociate the former from the latter. In order to understand the same point in Marx's analysis of capitalism, let us compare the work of a peasant in feudal Europe liable to compulsory work (*corvée*) with the work of a worker in capitalism (*MEW* 23:593, *C* I:713). The peasant is obliged to work, say, three days a week for his lord on the lord's domain. The other three days, he works for himself on his own land. The sphere of equality and domination are sharply distinguished from each other – substantially, temporally and spatially. In the eye of the peasant, the forced labor for the lord never gets the character of his own voluntary labor. There is no semblance or illusion of equality involved here. The extraction of surplus-labor is *immediate* and *direct*; and the relation of domination is transparent. Now let us look at the worker in capitalism. The worker still works, say, three days a week for himself, i.e. the necessary labor to compensate for the value of his labor-power. The other three days, he works for the capitalist to generate surplus value. But this is not the way the working week *seems* to the worker. The six days of work appear to him *as one single block* of work, in compensation for which he receives a wage. In the wage-labor, therefore, even the part of the work that is unpaid *seems* to be paid. Marx even warns that the sharp distinction that he makes between the necessary and the surplus labor in capitalism is only of a heuristic purpose. In the actual labor process, right from the beginning every minute and every second of the labor process is an intermingling of the

necessary and the surplus labor, such that it is not possible to dissociate the one from the other⁷⁰.

(B) Equality is posited by domination.

For Hegel the structure of semblance is contradictory. Semblance exists; however, not as something *positive* that can exist apart from essence; but as something that is *sublated* or *negated* within essence. The same point holds for Marx. The semblance of equality, or the sphere of circulation in general, exists; however, not as something positive that can exist apart from the totality of capital, but as something that gets *sublated* or *negated* in it. In an important passage in *Capital* that serves as a conclusion to his argument, Marx writes,

It is quite evident from this that the law of appropriation or of private property, laws based on the production and circulation of commodities, turns into its direct opposite through its own internal and inexorable dialectic [schlägt...durch seine eigne, innere, unvermeidliche Dialektik in sein direktes Gegenteil um]. The exchange of equivalents, the original operation with which we started, is now

⁷⁰ The point that semblance and essence interpenetrate such that it is not possible to dissociate the former from the latter also helps us criticize one common misreading of Marx. According to this common misreading, Marx's critique of the ideology of equality and freedom consists in him showing that, although the individuals are *legally* free and equal they are *materially* unfree and unequal. This view – namely the view that regards individuals to be free and equal *in one aspect*, and unfree and unequal *in another aspect* – is, of course, correct. But if this was all that Marx could offer, his critique was not particularly incisive, or even for that matter interesting. In this view, the fact of freedom and equality is not *systematically* related to the fact of unfreedom and inequality. Rather, the two are only *externally* added together. Such external addition implies, firstly, that it is possible in capitalism to have legal freedom and equality without unfreedom and inequality (say, through fair distribution of material resources), and secondly, that it is possible to have unfreedom and inequality in capitalism without legal freedom and equality (say, through having slavery in capitalism). Marx's commitment to the organic conception of totality outright precludes these two possibilities.

turned round in such a way that there is only a seeming exchange [zum Schein ausgetauscht wird], since, firstly, the capital which is exchanged for labor-power is itself merely a portion of the product of the labor of others which has been appropriated without an equivalent; and, secondly, this capital must not only be replaced by its producer, the worker, but replaced together with an added surplus. The relation of exchange between capitalist and worker becomes a mere semblance belonging only to the process of circulation [ein dem Zirkulationsprozeß angehöriger Schein], it becomes a mere form, which is alien to the content of the transaction itself, and merely mystifies it. The constant sale and purchase of labor-power is the form; the content is the constant appropriation by the capitalist, without equivalent, of a portion of the labor of others which has already been objectified, and his repeated exchange of this labor for a greater quantity of the living labor of others. (MEW 23:609, C I:729-30)

Note the contradictory formulations that Marx uses in this passage to articulate the semblance of equality as *both* existent, *and* non-existent. Capitalist production requires the law of exchange of equivalents, but at the same time negates this law.⁷¹ Moreover – and this is another point – for Marx, quite like Hegel, the sublation or negation of semblance in essence is *complete*, and not partial. The equality that obtains through market transactions “turns into its direct opposite” in its *completeness*; since the money

⁷¹ Norman Geras quotes this passage of Marx, and castigates him for his dialectical language: “This turning into opposites is just a logical trick, or more generously perhaps – though that point stands – the enjoyment of intellectual paradox and surprise. It is a game with the two different senses of equivalence. Nothing, in fact, changes into its opposite in this matter.” Therefore, “Marx cannot really mean what he says.” (1984: 52-3). Geras is right that there are two different senses of equivalence involved here, one insofar as it occurs in the sphere of circulation, and the other insofar as it occurs as a moment of the totality of capital. However, he thinks that because the two senses of equivalence are perfectly “consistent” with each other, there cannot be any dialectic. I have indicated before that Hegel’s and Marx’s dialectic completely abide by the law of non-contradiction, which is the minimal requirement of any rational thought. Nonetheless, by dismissing dialectics as a mere “prevarication” that only “muddies the water”, Geras misses the point that the equivalence obtained in the market is false, yet *objectively* so. In order to be true to the Marxist understanding of ideology, one needs to accept *both* objectivity *and* falsity of ideology at the same time, and this one can arguably do only through dialectical thinking.

with which the capitalist pays the wage of the worker on the basis of equality of exchange is *already* accumulated through *past* labor of *other* workers. With respect to the *individual* worker, the analysis shows that it is the *surplus* labor that is appropriated without exchange. But with respect to the *class* of workers and the *class* of capitalists, the *whole* working day is appropriated without exchange.⁷²

(C) Equality is posited by domination as domination's own presupposition.

For Hegel, essence requires (“presupposes”) semblance, but at the same time essence produces (“posits”) this very presupposition. The same point holds for Marx. The relation of domination of capital requires (“presupposes”) equality; since it is *solely* through market transactions that capitalist exploitation can occur. This “presupposition”, however, is not external to capital. It is not the case that capital simply *finds* the equality available, and *then* comes to the scene to use it. Rather, capital is a *self-maintaining* and *self-reproducing* social system that is able to generate (“posits”) its necessary presupposition.⁷³ In the end of each production cycle, the worker is *coerced* to exert his freedom and equality through making a new transaction in the labor-market, mainly because the product of his labor has been expropriated from him, and he remains as much without access to the means of production as before.⁷⁴

⁷² It is appropriate to emphasize that for Hegel, as I have indicated in the Introduction to the dissertation, the standpoint of the logic of being is the standpoint of *individuals* that relate to each other atomistically. The *class* analysis is the analysis from the standpoint of *totality*, and accords with Hegel's logic of essence.

⁷³ I will discuss the self-maintaining and self-reproducing nature of the totality of capital in detail in Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ In the *Grundrisse*, Marx several times uses the language of “positing” and “presupposing” to describe the structure of capital. See especially (*MEW* 42:180-7, *Grundrisse* 255-263)

In closing, I would like to reiterate the three desiderata that I set for Marx in the introduction, the three desiderata that he needs to fulfill, such that his critique of ideology can be considered as successful. Marx needs to explain (1) Why people, in capitalism, intuitively believe that they are equal and free, (2) Why such belief in equality and freedom, in capitalism, is illusory, and (3) Why despite the illusory character of equality and freedom, individuals continue to hold those beliefs. Now, after having explained Marx in a fair detail, we can realize that he indeed successfully explains the three desiderata: (1) People in capitalism intuitively believe that they are equal and free, because they are necessarily involved in market transactions, and because market transactions necessarily presuppose equality and freedom. (2) People's belief in equality and freedom is illusory, since market is only a moment of the totality of capital. The market transactions – which seem to embody equality and freedom from the point of view of the market – turn out to embody inequality and unfreedom from the point of view of the totality of capital. (3) Despite the illusory character of equality and freedom, individuals continue to hold those beliefs, since the totality of capital reproduces itself, independently of individuals, and thereby forces individuals to continuously sustain their belief in equality and freedom.

Part II: The Logic of Opposition

Chapter 2: Opposition as the Basic Relation of Domination

1- The Critique of the Symmetrical Relation of Recognition

In recent years, Axel Honneth has undertaken a project of “normative reconstruction” of Hegel’s social and political philosophy on the basis of the concept of “recognition”.⁷⁵

From the point of view of social ontology, recognition implies (1) that there are no individuals prior to and independent from the relation obtaining between them and (2) that the relation between individuals is reciprocal. Importantly, Honneth regards the reciprocity involved in recognition to be symmetrical.⁷⁶ This implies that the recognizer and the recognizee depend on and determine each other to the same extent. Thus, it is supposed that individuals in cognitive state are equal with each other: A holds B

⁷⁵ Honneth pursues this aim in several of his works. I content myself with citing two occasions in which Honneth clearly states his project: (1) “The ethical sphere [for Hegel] contains different classes of actions that are distinct in themselves but are *all* marked by the common quality of being able to articulate a certain form of reciprocal recognition.” (2010:51, emphasis added) (2) “In the *Philosophy of Right*, he [i.e. Hegel] explains *every* ethical institution with reference to a particular form of recognition.” (2007:352, emphasis added)

⁷⁶ Honneth explicitly uses the word “symmetry” to describe the relation of recognition. See, for example, (1995: 122, 128).

accountable to the claims that B makes to the same extent that B holds A accountable for the claims that A makes.

Arguably, such a normative conception of symmetrical recognition does not do justice to contemporary realities, where the relations between individuals are structurally saturated with power. For example, consider that the relationship between some particular capitalist and some worker of his cannot be, even remotely, symmetrical. This has nothing to do with moral integrity of the capitalist in question, but with the institutional and economic organization of capitalism, which produces and maintains the relation of asymmetry. As Marx has shown, the function of capital necessarily causes massive unemployment. Within the capitalist framework, the unemployed, taking on the form of an “industrial reserve army”, significantly reduce or entirely eliminate the bargaining power of workers. This economic arrangement makes workers inherently subordinate to capitalists; if ever a worker insists on his demands, the capitalist can simply replace him with one of those in the “reserve.”

Honneth simply regards reciprocal relations that are based on power as cases of “non-recognition” or “misrecognition”. Thus, he clearly implicates a strict dichotomy between relations characterized by recognition and relations characterized by power; and so, he effectively bans the inclusion of power within recognitive structure. In this way, Honneth conceives of power relations as “social pathologies”, which are mere aberrations from the otherwise healthy norms of the bourgeois-capitalist social order. While recognition constitutes the basis of sociality in this social order, such cases of “non-

recognition” or “misrecognition” spark a “struggle for recognition” which has the potential to restore the normal recognitive structure.⁷⁷

It is appropriate to emphasize that the view that Honneth represents – the view that holds recognition to be symmetrical – has become widespread in current scholarship on Hegel. According to Robert Pippin, the “conditions of successful agency” for Hegel cannot be satisfied unless individuals are understood as participants in an ethical form of life, *Sittlichkeit*, and finally in a certain historical form of ethical life, in which such relations of recognition can be *genuinely mutual*, where that means that the bestowers of recognition are themselves actually free, where the intersubjective recognitional (sometimes called “communicative”) relation is sustained in a *reciprocal* way. (2007:67, emphases added)

Similarly, Robert Brandom holds that “recognition is an equivalence relation”. He argues that “*reciprocal* (that is, *symmetric*) recognition” (original emphases) is a “necessary condition” for an individual’s recognition of himself as an individual; symmetrical recognition is therefore constitutive of the individual:

Insofar as recognition is *de facto* not *symmetric*, it cannot be *reflexive*. I cannot be properly self-conscious (recognize myself) except in the context of a recognition structure that is *reciprocal*: insofar as I am recognized by those I recognize. (2007:137)

⁷⁷ In a more recent essay, Honneth explicitly admits that he has defined recognition in exclusion to power: “Recognition has always been treated [by Honneth] as representing the opposite of practices of domination or subjection. Such forms of exercising power were to be regarded as phenomena of withheld recognition...such that recognition could never come under suspicion of functioning as a means of domination.” (2012:76) In order to address the issue of power, Honneth in the said essay endeavors to distinguish ideological instances of recognition, which secure social domination, from recognition in its normal function, which positively contributes to the formation of the autonomy of individuals. However, still he regards such ideological instances of recognition to be infrequent, and sees them as aberrations from recognition in its normal state, thereby reiterating the dichotomy between recognition and power in a different register.

It is certainly true that, for Hegel, reciprocal [gegenseitig] relation is a necessary condition for reflexivity, and reflexivity is that which constitutes the individual qua individual. Yet, by conflating reciprocity with symmetry, Brandom, quite like Honneth and Pippin, plainly assumes that recognitive relation is devoid of power.⁷⁸

I concede that Hegel, in the *Philosophy of Right*, presupposes recognition as a symmetrical relation that undergirds modern social institutions. Nonetheless, given the blatant presence of power relations in the modern capitalist world, I believe it is necessary – despite the *Philosophy of Right* – to explicate an account of recognition that is structurally asymmetrical. Indeed, Hegel in the official locus of his discussion of recognition, the dialectic of lordship and bondage in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, does not discuss power as an aberration from, and therefore external to, the recognitive structure, but rather he discusses power as constitutive of this structure.⁷⁹ Yet, the dialectic of lordship and bondage is already profusely discussed in the literature, and I do

⁷⁸ Pippin's and Brandom's cases, however, are more nuanced than Honneth, as it seems that both Pippin and Brandom grant that the relation of power is already a relation of recognition, but they maintain that such a case of recognition is not a "true" or "successful" recognition (Pippin), or is a "defective" form of recognition (Brandom). Despite the difference, however, the two are very close to Honneth, insofar as all regard the symmetrical relation of recognition as the basis of unity in modern society, from which the asymmetrical relation of power is a deviation. See also (Pippin 2000:156)

⁷⁹ It seems that the dialectic of lordship and bondage for Honneth, Pippin and Brandom simply belongs to the pre-history of modernity, or even prehistory of mankind, and in modern bourgeois-capitalist social order, such an asymmetry has given way to a genuinely symmetrical relation. Indeed, as far as I see it, they regard the collapse of the dialectic of lordship and bondage in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a kind of negative proof, which demonstrates the necessity of establishment of the symmetrical relation between individuals. I do not intend to question this way of reading of the dialectic of lordship and bondage, but this does not change the fact that Hegel there explicitly discusses power as constitutive of the structure of recognition. This is the reason that despite the systematic place of this chapter within the overall structure of the book, the dialectic of lordship and bondage in isolation from other parts of the book has served as an almost endless source of inspiration for Marxists, feminists, and other radical thinkers.

not intend to go over this well-trodden territory. Rather, in the framework of this dissertation, in order to explicate the asymmetrical character of the relation between individuals, I turn to the chapter, “determinations of reflection” [Reflexionsbestimmungen], in the *Science of Logic*.

Given the subject matter of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel in his exposition of the determinations of reflection does not refer to recognition, or to any other explicitly social or political issues. Rather, as I will show, he discusses the general “logical” structure of individuals, and he does so, *solely* through examining the relations between individuals. Although I will not ground this claim in this chapter, the logic of the determinations of reflection in the *Science of Logic* is indeed akin to the logic that underpins the relation between lord and bondsman in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.⁸⁰ Our present focus on the *Science of Logic* is even more justified in virtue of the fact that the explicitly experiential content of the *Phenomenology*, and Hegel’s discussion of self-consciousness, desire, and labor within the context of the dialectic of lordship and bondage, might distract us from the current project of carving out the social ontology undergirding that dialectic.

In the chapter “determinations of reflection”, Hegel discusses the structure of individuals through various relations that obtain between individuals. These relations include “identity” [Identität], “difference” [Unterschied], “diversity” [Verschiedenheit], “opposition” [Gegensatz], and “contradiction” [Widerspruch]. I will argue that Hegel’s discussion of the determinations of reflection establishes (1) that there is no pre-relational

⁸⁰ Since Hegel never wrote a distinct “logic” of the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, there is an unsettled controversy about the nature of this logic, especially because he wrote the *Science of Logic* later (1812/13) and with a different conception. I do not want to enter into this controversy here, but I hope the reader who is familiar with the dialectic of lordship and bondage through this chapter will realize that the logic of determinations of reflection in the *Science of Logic* is very similar to the logic that underpins the relation between lordship and bondage.

individual. Rather, individuals are *solely* constituted in and through relations; (2) that the most fundamental form of relation between individuals is the relation of opposition; and (3) that the relation of opposition, in its adequate form, is essentially asymmetrical. As the asymmetrical relation is a relation of power, these claims together demonstrate that – contrary to Honneth, Pippin and Brandom – for Hegel power is not *external* to the structure of the individuals, but is *constitutive* of it. As I will show, for Hegel the asymmetry that obtains through the relation of opposition has a complex structure. Namely, it does not obtain in *exclusion* of symmetry and equality, I argue, but has a necessary moment of symmetry and equality built into it. Such symmetry and equality function as an illusion – indeed a constitutive illusion – that conceals the asymmetrical relation of power.⁸¹

In what follows, I begin with a general account of the determinations of reflection, what they are, and how they are related to each other (Section 2). I continue with discussing the dialectical development of the determinations of reflection, in order to show how opposition, as well as the contradiction that ensues from it, constitutes the individuals (Section 3). I explicate then why the relation of opposition is essentially asymmetrical, and why the relation of opposition is more fundamental than the relation of diversity. (Sections 4 through 6) Thereafter, I explain how Hegel’s logic of opposition underpins Marx’s conception of the opposition of labor and capital in capitalism, and

⁸¹ It is worth mentioning that Iris Marion Young has also criticized Honneth’s exclusion of power from recognitive relation. Young discusses the first form of recognition for Honneth, namely, love in the sphere of family, and argues, contra Honneth, that “the relation between caring adult and child...is necessarily asymmetrical – because the care receiver depends on the caregiver in a way that the giver does not depend on the receiver.” (2007: 207) While I definitely agree with Young, my approach is quite distinct from hers, as she does not engage in any logical analysis of the relation of recognition.

Catharine MacKinnon's conception of gender formation (Sections 7 and 8). Finally, I recapitulate my discussion by comparing a social ontology based on asymmetrical of opposition with one based on a symmetrical relation of recognition (Section 9).

2- The Determinations of Reflection and the Fundamentality of Opposition

In the Introduction to the dissertation and the first chapter, I have argued for the following two claims: (1) In the logic of essence, Hegel develops an ontology that is absolutely relational. In contrast to an ontology based on priority of things over relations prevalent in the history of philosophy since Aristotle, Hegel's ontology in the logic of essence is based on priority of relations over things. (2) The ontology of absolute relationality in the logic of essence is at the same time the ontology of domination. The relation of "equality" that obtains by virtue of "indifference" of individuals to each other – i.e. the relation of *Gleichgültigkeit* – is an "illusion" [Schein] that conceals the true relation of domination. This illusion, however, is not an arbitrary error that can be dispensed with through enlightened reasoning, but it is objective and immanent to the structure of the (social) world (in capitalism). Hegel's discussion of the "determinations of reflection" presupposes these two basic claims, but at the same time further grounds them.⁸²

⁸² This accords to Hegel's general mode of exposition. Hegel's arguments in the logic are not simply deductive and linear. Rather, the argument of the logic, as Klaus Hartmann notes, is "a complex unity of linearity, progression and regression, and architectonic" (1976:106).

According to Hegel, determinations of reflection are categories that obtain solely through relation (hence, the very naming of the term: determination *of reflection*) and “are valid for everything” [von allem gelten] (*WdL* II:36, *SL* 409). They include:

- A- Identity [Identität]
- B- Difference [Unterschied]
 - 1- Absolute Difference [absoluter Unterschied]
 - 2- Diversity [Verschiedenheit]
 - 3- Opposition [Gegensatz]
- C- Contradiction [Widerspruch]

According to George Lukács, “the discovery of determinations of reflection and putting them in the center [is] the revolutionary deed of Hegel in philosophy.” (*GLW* 13:533) Of course, Lukács does not mean that Hegel simply found these concepts, which are perennial in the history of philosophy. What he means is that Hegel was the first philosopher who developed these concepts *solely* in relation to each other, and showed that these concepts, in a very strong sense, are all internally related to each other. Hegel writes:

It is of the greatest importance to perceive and to bear in mind this nature of the determinations of reflection, namely, that their truth consists *only* [nur] in their relation to one another, that therefore each in its very concept contains the other; without this knowledge, not a single step can really be taken in philosophy. (*WdL* II:73, *SL* 438, emphasis added)

For Hegel, the development of essence is one of “remaining-inward” [Insichbleiben] (*Nürnberg Logik* §34, *WW* 4:17). This means that in the logic of essence, there is no new content added *from outside*, so to speak. Rather, with the development of essence, the content, which is derived from relation, is re-configured through re-configuration of relation. This is precisely what is going on in the progress of determinations of reflection. That is, for Hegel, the determinations of reflection which are expressed in the following

propositions are intimately interpenetrated with each other; each implies the others; each contains the others:

- (1) The proposition of identity: “Everything is identical with itself; $A=A$ ” [Alles ist mit sich identisch; $A=A$] or its negative expression: “A cannot at the same time be A and not A” [A kann nicht zugleich A und nicht A sein]. (*EnzL*. §115, also *WdL* II:36, *SL* 409)
- (2) The proposition of diversity: “Everything is diverse.” [Alle Dinge sind verschieden], or its negative expression: “There are no things that are the same as each other.” [Es gibt nicht zwei Dinge, die einander gleich sind.] (*WdL* II:52, *SL* 422)
- (3) The proposition of opposition: “Everything is opposite” [Alles ist Entgegengesetzt.](*EnzL*. §119Z), or “Everything is an opposite, is determined either as positive or as negative” [dass Alles ein Entgegengesetztes ist, ein entweder als positive oder als negative Bestimmtes] (*WdL* II:73, *SL* 438)
- (4) The proposition of contradiction: “Everything is inherently contradictory” [Alle Dinge sind an sich widersprechend] (*WdL* II:74, *SL* 439)

The claims that each of identity, difference, opposition and contradiction is *in* the others – for example, contradiction is *in* identity, or opposition is *in* identity –and that everything is *at the very same time* identical, different, diverse, opposite and contradictory⁸³ are extremely important for Hegel’s philosophy in general. Hegel often criticizes representational thought because it is unable to grasp the close interrelation of determinations of reflection, and contents itself with mere “enumerating them one after the other” (*WdL* II: 38, *SL* 411). He castigates “external reflection” for which, “reason is nothing more than a loom on which it externally combines and interweaves the warp, of say, identity, and then the woof of difference”, without attempting to understand the internal relation between the two (*WdL* II:39, *SL* 412). However, although – and this is an

⁸³ Cf. Nicolai Hartmann: “Faßt man die Reflexionsbestimmungen in der Form von Gesetzten des Wesens, so besagen sie dieses: alle Dinge sind *zugleich* identisch, verschieden, gegensätzlich und widersprechend.” (1929: 441, emphasis added)

extremely important point – the determinations of reflection are of the same nature for Hegel, this does not mean that they are of the same order of importance. Rather, for Hegel there is a *progressive* dialectical development from identity, to difference, to diversity, to opposition, to contradiction. Comparing identity and contradiction, Hegel carefully writes that they express the same content,

but in fact, if it were a question of grading the two determinations and they had to be kept separate, then contradiction would have to be taken as the deeper determination and more characteristic of essence [das Tiefere und Wesenhaftere].
(*WdL* II:75, *SL* 439)

The proposition of contradiction, he emphasizes, “in contrast to others expresses more the truth and the essence of things” (*WdL* II:74, *SL* 439). This means that although the determinations of reflection in some sense are the same, nevertheless, there is, to adopt a term from Klaus Hartmann, a “Steigerungs-Kaskade” (escalating cascade) from identity to difference to diversity to opposition to contradiction (1999:179). Hegel himself uses the term “zuspitzen” (i.e. to sharpen, to pinnacle, to come to the point) to describe this dialectical progression. What is already present in its “dull” [abgestumpft] form in identity and diversity gets its “sharpened” form in opposition and contradiction, which are the most adequate determinations of reflection and make all things, Hegel asserts, “lively” and “active” (*WdL* II:78, *SL* 442).

In the dialectic of the determinations of reflection, Hegel’s desiderata, therefore, are the following: (1) to show that identity, difference, diversity, opposition and contradiction in a very strong sense are interrelated to each other and cohere with each other, in such a way that each implies all the others; and (2) to show that opposition and contradiction are the most fundamental of determinations of reflection, and it is by virtue

of opposition and contradiction that identity, difference and diversity become what they are. Importantly, as I will show later, the relation of opposition, as well as contradiction that ensues from it, forms a relation of domination. Since opposition and contradiction are the “deepest” forms of relation between individuals, the claim that opposition and contradiction are relations of domination amounts to the claim that Hegel’s ontology is ontology of power. I will explain some of the important social implications of this claim later in the chapter. For now, it is appropriate to zoom in on Hegel’s exposition of the dialectical path from identity, to difference, to diversity, to opposition, to contradiction. A proper treatment of this dialectical path requires a book.⁸⁴ In the following, my treatment is brief, with the aim of indicating how the concept of power plays a crucial role in this dialectical development.

3- The Dialectic of the Determinations of Reflection

In the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel describes the general method of dialectical progression in the logic as “nothing other than merely the *positing* of what is already contained in a concept.” (*EnzL*. §88) It is only through adherence to the principle of making explicit what is already implicit in a category, Hegel thinks, that the “*necessary* progression” of categories can be established. In what follows, I detail how Hegel grasps the necessary progression from identity to difference (3-1), to diversity (3-2), to opposition (3-3), and finally to contradiction (3-4).

⁸⁴ For a helpful commentary on the chapter of determinations of reflection, See Iber (1990:239ff).

3-1- From Identity to Difference

According to Hegel, the relation of identity has to be captured in the following way:

“Everything is identical with itself; $A=A$ ” (*EnzL.* §115). In the relation $A=A$, Hegel believes, the first A (which comes before the equality sign) is different from the second A (which comes after the equality sign). The first A *identifies* itself with the second A . But the second A is *being identified* with the first A . That is, in the very expression of the proposition of identity, the proposition of difference is already implied⁸⁵. Hegel calls this difference, the “absolute difference”, namely, the difference which is already *in* identity (*WdL* II:46, *SL* 417). True to the general form of the logic of essence, it is not the case that *first* there is identity, only *then* there is difference: but the act of identification of (the first) A with (the second) A is *at the very same time* the act of differentiation of (the first) A from (the second) A . This means that identity and difference are entirely integral to each other.

3-2- From Difference to Diversity

In the second dialectical move, Hegel maintains that in order that the relation of identity and absolute difference ($A=A$) could be held, there should be *other* individuals different

⁸⁵ “Wir können ihn [den Satz der Identität] zwar auf die Formel $A=A$ bringen und diese anschreiben. Aber wir schreiben auf diese Weise drei Zeichen an, darunter zwei (notwendig) *verschiedene* A , nämlich eines, das links vom Gleichheitszeichen steht, und ein anderes, das rechts von ihm erscheint. Wer den Identitätssatz verstanden hat, hat natürlich auch verstanden, daß es ‘wesentlich’ (nicht seinshaft) gleichgültig ist, auf welcher Seite ein Zeichen jeweils steht. Im Identitätsgedanken soll gerade alle unmittelbare Differenz aufgehoben sein. Die Formel $A=A$ verstanden haben heißt gerade, den Gedanken sich von ihr abstoßen zu lassen und auf diese Weise das reine Sich-Herstellen der Einheit zu vollziehen. Dieses Sich-Herstellen der Identität ist aber unmittelbar ein Negieren, ein Unterscheiden.” (Hoffmann 2012: 337)

from A, from which A can be differentiated. This results in the relation of diversity, namely the relation between A and B, which is a variation of the relation of difference. The relation between A and B for Hegel is a relation of externality or indifference, as the individuals remain self-standing apart from the relation obtaining between them. In the relation of diversity, Hegel writes, “each of the different is what it is *for itself*, and each is indifferent against its relation to the others, so that the relation is an external one for it” (*EnzL*. §117). Or he writes, “the diverse do not relate to each other as identity and difference do, but merely as simply *diverse* that are indifferent [gleichgültig] to one another and to their determinateness” (*WdL* II:48, *SL* 419).

For Hegel, the two diverse individuals are identical to each other *in some respect*, and are different from each other *in some other respect*. But the internal relation between identity and difference of diverse individuals cannot be conceptualized through the relation of diversity. This is the reason that Hegel regards diversity as an “immediate” unity of identity and difference (*EnzL*. §117). To give an example, if we understand the relation of races in terms of diversity, we can say that a black American and a white American are *identical* with each other, *with respect to* their both being American, and they are *different* from each other, *with respect to* the color of their skin. Within the framework of the relation of diversity, it is not clear how the fact of being American relates to the fact of being white or black. The relation between being an American and race is simply a matter of externality, a matter of indifference.

The indifference of individuals to one another reminds us of the logic of being, and its atomistic ontology. The relation of two diverse individuals is similar to the relation of something [Etwas] and an other [ein Anderes] in the logic of being, and is therefore

subject to a similar sort of problems: the infinite regress of diverse individuals, and the impossibility of complete determination of each individual. It is for this reason that Hegel designates the act of reflection that obtains between diverse individuals as “reflection alienated from itself” [sich entfremdete Reflexion], a kind of reflection that has relapsed to the logic of being. He writes:

In reflection thus alienated from itself, likeness [Gleichheit] and unlikeness [Ungleichheit] present themselves, therefore, as themselves unrelated, and reflection *keeps* them *apart*, for it refers them *to one and the same something* by means of ‘in so far,’ ‘from this side or that,’ and ‘from this view or that.’ Thus diverse things that are one and the same, when likeness and unlikeness are said of them, are *from one side* like each other, but from *another side* unlike, and *in so far as* they are alike, *to that extent* they are not unlike. *Likeness* thus refers only to itself, and *unlikeness* is equally only unlikeness. (*WdL* II:50, *SL* 420)⁸⁶.

Within the framework of the relation of diversity, Hegel talks about “likeness” [Gleichheit] and “unlikeness” [Ungleichheit] of individuals to each other instead of their “identity” and “difference”. The two individuals are like each other, only in *some* respects, not in *all* respects. If they were to be like each other in *all* respect, they would be *identical* with each other, not *like* each other. Therefore, according to Hegel, “likeness” is not identity proper, but “external identity”, and similarly, “unlikeness” is not difference proper, but “external difference” (*WdL* II:49, *SL* 419, See also *EnzL*. §117). In contrast to identity and difference that belong to the constitution of individuals – individuals are what they are by virtue of their identity and difference – likeness and unlikeness only exist for an “external” or “third” standpoint, which, Hegel avers, merely “compares” [vergleichen] the one with the other, incessantly “passing to and fro between likeness and

⁸⁶ I have used Di Giovanni’s translation of this passage (364), with modification.

unlikeness” (*WdL* II:50, *SL* 420). We have learned that the logic of being is the logic of representational thought or external reflection that regards the individuals as given, and *then* comes to the scene to determine them. Similarly, the act of comparing is “a subjective activity which falls outside” the individuals [*ein subjektives, außerhalb ihrer fallendes Tun*] (*WdL* II:51, *SL* 421), and by doing so in effect takes the individuals as given.

In the passage quoted above, Hegel maintains that, on a closer analysis, likeness only refers to itself, and unlikeness only to itself. This is another way of expressing the atomistic ontology underlying the relation of diversity. We cannot understand how likeness (being American) is related to unlikeness (being white or black), as either of likeness or unlikeness is regarded as a determinacy that is self-standing by itself. The transition from the relation of diversity to the relation of opposition is motivated by the need to determine the relation between likeness and unlikeness. I will discuss this transition below.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Hegel’s critique of the relation of diversity can be read as a critique of the language of equality/inequality that is pivotal in current discussions in liberal political philosophy. (To make it even more explicit, one can translate “Gleichheit” as “equality” and “Ungleichheit” as “inequality”). It is interesting to observe that Marx and Engels were also both extremely critical of any political agenda whose primary aim was equality. For Marx and Engels, the language of equality/inequality is too abstract to be philosophically meaningful, and politically helpful. People are always equal in some respect, and unequal in another respect, and if we aim to reduce equality in one respect, it might well increase inequality in another respect. The language of equality and inequality, as Hegel’s logic shows us, presupposes an atomistic ontology, and it is this ontology that Marx and Engels were fundamentally against. A worthwhile political agenda must aim at radical transformation of social *relations*, which constitute the individuals in the first place. See especially Marx’s critique of the program of Social Democratic Workers’ Party of Germany in his “Critique of the Gotha Program” (*MEW* 19:20ff, *MECW* 24:86ff). Also Engels’ letter to Bebel, March 1875, where he criticizes the same program: “‘The elimination of all social and political inequality’, rather than ‘elimination of all class differences’, is similarly a most dubious expression. As between one country, one province and even one place and another, living

3-3- From Diversity to Opposition

We have learned that the relation of identity (between A and A) presupposes the relation of diversity (between A and B). In a further dialectical move, Hegel wants to show that the relation of diversity, in its turn, presupposes the relation of opposition. The relation of opposition obtains between what Hegel calls the “positive” and the “negative”, and can be captured in terms of the relation between +A (or simply A), and –A. (Note that the “positive” in this context should not be confused with the mere given, as the phrases of positive social sciences, or positivism may refer to. There is no such givenness in the logic of essence. “Positive” and “negative” are both relational terms.) In relation of opposition, Hegel writes,

What is different does not have an *other in general* [nicht ein *Anderes überhaupt*], but *its* own other [sondern *sein* Anderes] confronting it, that is to say, each has its own determination only in its relation to the other; it is only in itself reflected insofar as it is reflected into the other, and the other likewise; thus each is the other’s *own* other” (*EnzL.* §119, underline mine).

In the relation of diversity, any *arbitrary* individual (such as B, C, D, etc,) can function as the other of A, but in the relation of opposition, the other of A is only –A, and not any other individual. Likewise the other of –A is only A and not any other individual.⁸⁸ In

conditions will always evince a *certain* inequality which may be reduced to a minimum but never wholly eliminated. The living conditions of Alpine dwellers will always be different from those of the plainsmen. The concept of a socialist society as a realm of *equality* is a one-sided French concept deriving from the old ‘liberty, equality, fraternity’, a concept which was justified in that, in its own time and place, it signified a *phase of development*, but which, like all the one-sided ideas of earlier socialist schools, ought now to be superseded, since they produce nothing but mental confusion, and more accurate ways of presenting the matter have been discovered.” (*MEW* 34:129, *MECW* 24:71)

⁸⁸ “Entgegengesetzt verhalten sich zwei Relate x und y genau dann, wenn x *identisch* ist mit nicht-y und y *identisch* ist mit nicht-x [...]. Zu irgendeiner beliebigen Bestimmung x liegt also eine entgegengesetzte Bestimmung dann vor, wenn es nicht nur andere Bestimmungen y, z, etc

other words, within the relation of opposition, the law of excluded middle holds:

“*something is either A or not A; there is no third.*” (*WdL* II:73, *SL* 438)⁸⁹

Hegel defines the positive and the negative in terms of a relation that obtains between likeness and unlikeness. Whereas in the relation of diversity, likeness and unlikeness simply refer to two aspects of individuals and fall apart from each other, in the relation of opposition, likeness and unlikeness form a unity. “Diversity whose *indifferent* sides are just as much simply and solely *moments* of one negative unity is *opposition*”, Hegel writes (*WdL* II:52, *SL* 421). In order to understand how likeness and unlikeness strongly cohere with each other in the relation of opposition, let us focus on the definitions of the positive and the negative. Importantly, although the positive and the negative are defined solely in relation to each other, their definition is different from each other. According to Hegel, “the self-*likeness* reflected into itself that contains within itself the relation to unlikeness is the positive; and the *unlikeness* that contains within itself the relation to its non-being, to likeness is the negative” (*WdL* II:56, *SL* 424, Hegel’s emphases). That is, in the positive, the moment of self-likeness is the defining feature, and the unlikeness to the negative is only for the sake of securing the identity of the positive. In contrast, in the negative, the moment of self-unlikeness is the defining feature,

gibt, die von x verschieden sind, sondern wenn es zu x *genau eine* Bestimmung y gibt, die mit nicht-x identisch ist.” (Iber 1990: 371)

⁸⁹ This is a special meaning that Hegel gives to the traditional Aristotelian law of excluded middle. According to the traditional view, the law of excluded middle applies to the *properties* of an individual: The plant is green or not green. There is no third alternative. Understood in this way, Hegel asserts, the law is “so trivial that it is not worth the trouble of saying it” (*WdL* II:73, *SL* 438). Hegel’s own version of law of excluded middle applies to the *individuals* themselves, and not their properties. This is in accord with the general programmatic of the logic of essence that primarily deals with the *constitution* of individuals, and not merely with their *qualities*.

and self-likeness has a subordinate importance⁹⁰. As the formulation of the *Encyclopedia* has it, the positive is “the identical relation to self in such a way that it is *not* the negative”, and the negative is “what is different on its own account in such a way that it is *not* the positive” (*EnzL.* §119). That is, in the positive, the emphasis is on self-identity, and in the negative, the emphasis on difference from the positive. We can depict the relation of the positive and the negative in the following way:

The Positive – The Negative

Likeness-Unlikeness – *Likeness-Unlikeness*

As this formulation shows, for Hegel the positive and the negative are second-order relational structures that consist of two relational moments of likeness and unlikeness. This is in a sharp contrast with the logic of being, where the individuals are ultimately defined atomistically, as individuals that have a core untouched by relation to others. Here in the logic of essence, it is not the case that *first* the individuals are given, and only *then* they enter into a relation of opposition; rather the individuals are *derived* from the relation of opposition that obtains between them.

3-4- From Opposition to Contradiction

In the literature on Hegel, there is an abundant emphasis on the concept of contradiction. Given the centrality of contradiction in Hegel’s philosophy, this emphasis is appropriate. Nonetheless, the focus on contradiction itself may draw our attention away from the

⁹⁰ “What predominates in the positive is the aspect of self-identity; the relation to the other has the sole function of securing this self-identity. On the contrary, what predominates in the negative is the aspect by which self-identity disappears in the relation to the other.” (Longuenesse 2007:64).

genesis of contradiction through opposition. My emphasis on opposition is justified when we consider that the transition from opposition to contradiction is minimal. Indeed, in opposition, contradiction is already contained.⁹¹ For, each of the positive and the negative consists of two moments of likeness and unlikeness, which *simultaneously* cohere *and* exclude one another. According to Hegel, the positive and the negative are self-subsistent individuals that gain their very selfhood *through* their relation to each other; these individuals are entirely co-dependent at the very same time that each purports to exclude the other from itself. This is essentially what Hegel means by contradiction:

As this whole, each [of the opposites] is mediated with itself *by its other and contains* it. But further, it is mediated with itself by the *non-being of its other*; thus it is a unity existing on its own and it *excludes* the other from itself. The self-subsistent determination of reflection that contains the opposite determination, and is self-subsistent in virtue of this inclusion, at the same time also excludes it in its self-subsistence, therefore, it excludes from itself its own self-subsistence. [so schließt sie in ihrer Selbständigkeit ihre eigene Selbständigkeit aus sich aus.] [...] It is thus *contradiction*. (WdL II: 65, SL 431)

We can also make sense of Hegel's contradiction in the following way. In Hegel's ontology of absolute relationality, which is adequately articulated through the relation of opposition, each individual is solely the *result* of the relation of opposition. Yet, at the same time there must have been, *from the beginning*, individuals between which the relation of opposition could obtain. This state of affairs – where every individual is always already derived from a relation of opposition, while the individual asserts itself as

⁹¹ This point is also made by Klaus Hartmann, who maintains that although Hegel treats opposition and contradiction separately, in contradiction “nothing new is added at any rate” to opposition (Hartmann 1999:188).

self-subsistent and, as it were, as prior to the relation of opposition – is what Hegel calls contradiction.

Hegel holds that contradiction is “the opposition [that] is reflected into itself” (*WdL* II:36, *SL* 409). That is to say, contradiction is the opposition that relates to itself and, in so doing, constitutes itself as a unity. The self-referential character of contradiction makes it an *individual* proper. Thus, in contradiction the individuality of the positive and the negative, the individuality that is already *implicitly* present in the relation of opposition, is *explicitly* attained. We can also infer this point from the architectonic of Hegel’s exposition of the determinations of reflection: (A) identity, (B) difference, and (C) contradiction. As the order of the categories suggests, for Hegel the identity that is achieved through difference is contradiction. The fact that the determinate form of difference is opposition clearly indicates that, for Hegel, contradiction is the identity that is achieved through opposition. To put the same point in a metaphorical language, we may say that contradiction is an identity, which represents the *congealment* of the process of relationality of opposition, the congealment through which the positive and the negative are constituted as distinct individuals. We shall, therefore, conclude that, whereas the relation of opposition, precisely speaking, obtains *between* two opposing individuals, contradiction occurs *within each* opposing individual – contradiction for Hegel is primarily *self*-contradiction.⁹²

⁹² This point – that dialectical contradiction is *self*-contradiction – is well grasped by Adorno: “The concept of contradiction will play a central role here, more particularly, the contradiction in things themselves, contradiction *in* the concept, not contradiction *between* concepts.” [Der Begriff des Widerspruchs, und zwar des Widerspruchs in den Sachen selbst, des Widerspruchs *im* Begriff, nicht des Widerspruchs *zwischen* Begriffen] (*NS-V* II: 17, *Lectures on the Negative Dialectics*: 7).

4- The Asymmetrical Nature of Opposition

The transition from the relation of diversity to the relation of opposition is the transition from the relation of equality qua indifference, where the individuals have a *symmetrical* relation with each other, to the relation of domination, where there is an *asymmetrical* relation between the individuals. Note that asymmetry is the *minimal* condition for a relation to be called a relation of power. In the logic of essence there are more determinate conceptions of power, especially the power of totality over all individuals that involve a rich array of causal relations. (I will discuss this in Chapters 3 through 5). But all such more determinate conceptions of power presuppose asymmetrical relation of opposition, and are based on it. Regarding the relation of opposition, we should note that the relation of the positive and the negative is *asymmetrical*; since whereas the positive is a *self-centered* individual that relates to the negative only subordinately, the negative is a *de-centered* and *disjointed* individual that is defined by difference from its center in the positive.⁹³ I will discuss some social implications of Hegel's conception of opposition in the work of Marx, Adorno and MacKinnon later in the chapter – but for now, I would like to briefly mention that such a conception underlies Simone de Beauvoir's project of defining woman as the "second sex". According to de Beauvoir,

The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as

⁹³ This conception of the positive and the negative is similar to Hegel's discussion of lord and bondsman in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. From the logical point of view, the lord and bondsman reciprocally mediate each other, yet it is the lord that is eventually self-centered. Hegel defines the lord and bondsman in the following way: "One is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is the lord, the latter is the bondsman." (*PhG* §189, Miller's translation)

is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human-beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity (1952: xxi).

And even more explicitly:

Thus humanity is male and man defined woman not in herself, but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being [...]. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other (ibid: xxii).⁹⁴

In the relation of diversity, there is a third standpoint, an “impartial spectator” (Adam Smith’s phrase) so to speak, from which the diverse individuals are compared. The criteria by means of which the diverse individuals are compared are located, precisely speaking, not in individuals themselves, but in the third non-situated “neutral” standpoint. Hegel’s analysis of the relation of opposition shows us that such “neutral” standpoint is a mere figment of imagination; it is not objective *in* the individuals. Rather, the so-called “neutral” standpoint is the positive itself. It is the positive that provides the criteria both for itself and for the negative. (I will discuss this point in more detail in the next section.) In de Beauvoir’s words, “man is at once judge and party to the case” (ibid: xxxiii).

The asymmetrical relation of opposition is not limited to the case of men and women. Indeed, the social world is permeated with such relations of power. Just to give few examples, in international relations, it is the central capitalist countries that are the

⁹⁴ When de Beauvoir claims that there is no reciprocity between men and women, or that women are only the inessential, one should not take her claim quite literally. There is of course a reciprocal relation between men and women – and for this reason, both are essential – yet this reciprocity is asymmetrical. De Beauvoir is totally aware of this point, when she writes, “here is to be found the basic trait of woman: she is the other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another.” (ibid: xxvi)

positive and the self-alike, and the peripheral countries that are the negative and the self-unlike. In race, it is white that is the positive and the self-alike, and black that is the negative and the self-unlike. In the realm of economy, it is the capitalists that are the positive and the self-alike, and the workers that are the negative and the self-unlike.

I have explained that the positive and the negative are both contradictory, in that each contains the other as its own constitutive moment; yet excludes it at the same time. It is important to emphasize that, corresponding to asymmetrical relation between the positive and the negative, the contradiction that obtains in the positive is distinct from that of the negative. According to Hegel, “the positive is only *implicitly* the contradiction, whereas the negative is contradiction *posited*.” [Aber das Positive ist nur *an sich* dieser Widerspruch; das Negative dagegen der *gesetzte* Widerspruch.] (*WdL* II:66, *SL* 432). Contradiction in the positive is *implicit*, since the positive is primarily defined in terms of its identity, which is subordinately contrasted to difference. In contrast, the contradiction of the negative is *explicit*, since its very identity is primarily defined in terms of non-identity, in terms of difference from the positive. In order to illustrate this point, it is helpful to bring in Marx’s conception of the relation of opposition between capital and labor, which he in his early work, the *Holy Family* (1845), conceptualizes in the following way:

Proletariat and wealth are opposites; as such they form a single whole. They are both creations of the world of private property. The question is exactly what place each occupies in the opposition. It is not sufficient to declare them two sides of a single whole. Private property as private property, as wealth, is compelled to maintain *itself*, and thereby its opposite, the proletariat, in *existence*. That is the *positive* side of the opposition, self-satisfied private property. The proletariat, on the contrary, is compelled as proletariat to abolish itself and thereby its opposite,

private property, which determines its existence, and which makes it proletariat. It is the *negative* side of the opposition, its restlessness within its very self, dissolved and self-dissolving private property. (*MEW* 2:37, *MECW* 4:36-7, original emphasis)

According to Marx, thus, the workers and capitalists (in this passage, the “proletariat” and “wealth”) constitute a relation of opposition; the capitalists are the “positive” that are primarily self-identical (“self-satisfied”), and the workers are the “negative” whose identity are formed through their very difference (“restlessness within its very self”). The capitalists and the workers are both essentially contradictory, yet the former gets power through the contradiction that is constitutive of it, while the latter becomes powerless through its contradiction. As both are enmeshed in relations of power, both are alienated from what makes them human-being; yet their mode of alienation is distinct from each other:

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement. But the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognizes estrangement as *its own power* and has in it the *semblance* of a human existence. The latter feels annihilated in estrangement; it sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence. It is, to use an expression of Hegel, in its abasement the indignation at that abasement, an *indignation* to which it is necessarily driven by the contradiction between its human *nature* and its condition of life, which is the outright, resolute and comprehensive negation of that nature. (ibid)⁹⁵

⁹⁵ It goes too far to immediately identify Marx’s conception of the relation of opposition between the capitalists and the workers in this passage with the Hegelian one. In Marx’s early writings, the concept of “alienation” presupposes a distinct understanding of “human nature” as a being that realizes self through work. However, from the Hegelian perspective that I have been advocating so far, there is no pre-relational human nature, and if there is anything as human nature, it is solely *derived* from social relations. Marx himself later abandoned grounding his theory on the concept of human nature. His theory in *Capital* is primarily based on the analysis of social

It is important to emphasize that for Hegel, as well as for Marx, although the positive is in the position of power, it is the negative that is associated with “activity” and “liveliness” (Hegel’s phrases) – an activity that can potentially change the relations of power. This theme is explicitly formulated in lord-bondsman dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the bondsman (or the negative) eventually, through his labor, manages to abolish the relations of power that are constitutive of both the master (or the positive), and of himself. Similarly, for Marx, it is the “positive” that is associated with conservation of power-relations, whereas the “negative” is potentially disruptive. Marx writes, “within this opposition, the private property-owner is therefore the *conservative* side, the proletarian the *destructive* side. From the former arises the action of preserving the opposition, from the latter the action of annihilating it.” (ibid) That Hegel ascribes true agency to the negative is evidence that Hegel’s philosophy – despite its occasional reputation for being conservative – is revolutionary at its logical core. Since my concern in this dissertation is to carve out the logical *structure* of domination in capitalism, I leave the question of *agency* aside. Needless to emphasize that any such conception of emancipatory praxis presupposes an adequate understanding of the dynamics of power, and should have as its starting point the concerns similar to the concerns of this dissertation.

5- The Logical Proof for the Asymmetrical Nature of Opposition

In this section, I focus on the dialectical development of the relation of opposition in order to show how Hegel *proves* that the relation of opposition in its adequate form is

relations, which is quite consistent with the ontology of absolute relationality in Hegel’s logic of essence.

essentially asymmetrical. In doing so, I also show how equality and symmetry are integrated within the structure of power that obtains in the relation of opposition.

Consider the following two groups of examples of the relation of opposition. (1) One group includes the relation between up and down, right and left, north and south, east and west, etc. (2) The other group includes the examples that I mentioned in the previous section, namely, the relation between capitalists and workers, between men and women, between central capitalist countries and the peripheral ones, etc. In both groups, there is a relation of opposition between relata; each relatum is related, not to some *arbitrary* others (in plural), but to *its own* singular other, such that its (east, men) negation immediately results in the other relatum (west, women). Yet there is a distinct difference between (1) and (2), namely, it is only in (2) that the relation of opposition is explicitly *asymmetrical*. That is, it is only in (2) that the relation of power is being stabilized and secured.

Indeed, Hegel's dialectical exposition of the relation of opposition goes through two consecutive stages that correspond to the two groups of examples that were considered above. Importantly, (1) and (2) are not simply two varieties of the relation of opposition that exist side-by-side each other. Rather, type (1) for Hegel is "the empty opposition of the Understanding" which "has its place in the context of such abstractions as number, direction, etc." (*EnzL*. §119), while in the more concrete instances, such as in the Spiritual and social relations, the relation of opposition is of type (2).⁹⁶ From a logical point of view, there is a progression from (1) to (2), such that (2) expresses the relation of

⁹⁶ One other example of the relation of opposition of type (2) is the relation of spirit and nature. Spirit and nature are interdependent – neither can exist without the other. Yet, the interdependence involved is asymmetrical. For Hegel, nature is primarily *external* to itself and exists *for* spirit (*EnzL* §119Z).

opposition more adequately. Hegel's exposition of the relation of opposition in the main text (*WdL* II:55-9, *SL* 424-7) is different from the Remark (*WdL* II: 60-4, *SL* 427-31), but the content is the same. In the main text, he conceives of (1) as "opposition in itself" and (2) as "opposition in and for itself". In the Remark, in (1) he regards the positive and the negative equally as "opposite as such" [Entgegengesetzte überhaupt], whereas in (2) he regards the positive as "the non-opposed" [das Nichtentgegengesetzte], and the negative as "the opposed" [das Entgegengesetzte]. In the following, I give a short account of the dialectical progression from (1) to (2).⁹⁷

5-1- "Opposition in itself" or the "Opposite as such"

The hallmark of the relation of opposition in this, first, stage – that is, for example, between "6 miles in an easterly direction" and "6 miles in a westerly direction" (Hegel's example, *EnzL*. §119) – is that the positive and the negative can be "exchanged" with each other. In the relation between east and west, either of east or west can be equally considered as the positive or the negative.⁹⁸ According to Hegel, whether east is positive or negative does not belong to the constitution of east itself, but it is only from an *external* point of view that it is regarded as positive or negative. The indifferent exchangeability of relata and their indeterminacy make relation of opposition in this stage similar to the relation of diversity. Indeed, Hegel calls the relata of this relation "diverse opposites" [die entgegengesetzte Verschiedene]:

⁹⁷ My account is indebted to Michael Wolff's insightful treatment of the subject (Wolff: 1981, 1986), yet it is different from it in one crucial point, as it becomes clear later.

⁹⁸ "Although one of the determinacies of positive and negative belongs to each side, they can be changed around [sie können verwechselt werden] and each side is of such a kind that it can be taken equally well as positive as negative." (*WdL* II:58, *SL* 426)

This opposition, therefore, is not regarded as having any truth in and for itself, and though it does belong to diverse sides, so that each is simply an opposite, yet, on the other hand, each side exists indifferently on its own, and it does not matter which of the two diverse opposites is regarded as positive or negative. (*WdL* II:60, *SL* 428)

In the Remark, Hegel analyzes the relation of “diverse opposites” to one another in the following way: The positive and the negative are “on the one hand, merely opposite as such” and “on the other hand”, they are “indifferent” towards each other (*WdL* II:62, *SL* 429). Thus, in the relation of “6 miles in a westerly direction” and “6 miles in an easterly direction”, the two, on the one hand, are “merely opposite” insofar as they sublate each other, and on the other hand, they are “indifferent” to each other, insofar as they are “simply 6 miles of way or space”.⁹⁹ To formulate it with a mathematical language, as Hegel himself does, “+a” and “-a” is an oppositional pair. Insofar as they confront each other, they are “opposition as such”, but insofar as each is “a” (without plus or minus sign), they are “indifferent” to each other.¹⁰⁰

The +a and -a are *simply opposite magnitudes*; the *a* is the *unity that stands in-itself* at the base of both [zum Grunde liegende ansichseiende Einheit] – itself indifferent towards the opposition and serving here as a dead base [tote Grundlage] without further conceptual consideration. The -a is indeed designated as the negative, the +a as the positive; but *the one* is just as much an *opposite* as *the other*. (*WdL* II:60, *SL* 428)

⁹⁹ Another example of Hegel is credit and debt. Insofar as they reciprocally sublate each other, they are “opposition as such”. But insofar as each is “a sum of money”, they are “indifferent” to each other (*WdL* II:61, *SL* 428).

¹⁰⁰ Wolff has shown that the “a” here (without plus or minus sign) is tantamount to the “absolute value” in algebra. Interestingly, according to Wolff, the concept of “absolute value” appears in mathematics in 19th century, contemporaneous with Hegel. (Wolff 1981: 91f)

As we see in this passage, Hegel calls the “a” which underlies “+a” and “-a”, the “unity that stands in-itself at the base” of the opposites. Michael Wolff calls this underlying unity “reflection-logical substratum” [das reflexionslogische Substrat] (Wolff 1981: 113ff). I find this terminology unfortunate, as the term “substratum” might be associated with an Aristotelian *hypokeimenon*, which is a being that lies underneath, thereby independent from, the properties or relations of an individual. Yet, as Wolff correctly emphasizes, the reflection-logical substratum does not exist independently from the relation of opposition; rather it is derived from such relation. In other words, it is not the case that *first* there is a substratum, to which *then* the character of the positive or the negative is added; but the so-called substratum is *already* produced through the relation of opposition – hence, the term *reflection-logical* substratum.

5-2- “Opposition in-and-for-itself” or the “Opposed” and the “Not-opposed”

The relation of “opposition in itself” is not adequately determinate. Firstly, the two relata can *indifferently* be exchanged with each other. Secondly – and this point is related to the first – the constitution of relata consists of a reflection-logical substratum that relates to the positive or to the negative *indifferently*. In the second dialectical move, Hegel maintains that it is wrong to conceive of the reflection-logical substratum as a “dead base” that lies underneath the positive and the negative, rather – and I cannot overemphasize this point – we should see that the so-called reflection-logical substratum is the positive itself. In other words, the common basis of the positive and the negative is not a common substratum that is equally detached/attached from/to them; instead, the basis is the positive itself. According to Hegel, this truth is also expressed in mathematics, since “a”

in mathematics is identical with “+a” (*WdL* II:62, *SL* 429). With this second dialectical move, we have the adequate conception of the relation of opposition that I explained in the previous section. The positive, Hegel in the Remark writes, is the “non-opposed” that is primarily self-identical, and the negative is “the opposed” that gets defined primarily in relation to the positive.

The move from conceiving of reflection-logical substratum as a neutral ground underlying the opposites to conceiving it as the positive itself is not explicitly addressed by Wolff. For this reason, his account falls short of understanding the relation of opposition as an asymmetrical relation of power. This move also shows how we should understand the relation of equality as an integral moment of the relation of power involved in opposition. The positive and the negative are equal with each other and have a symmetrical relation with each other; since they both share the same reflection-logical substratum. Nonetheless, they are at the same time in a relation of power; since the reflection-logical substratum is nothing but the positive itself. This means that the relation of equality of the positive with itself is imposed upon the negative; the negative is what it is only by conforming to the relation that the positive establishes within itself.

This conception of the interrelation of power and equality is extremely helpful for understanding modern structures of power, where the claims of equality have become common cultural assets across the world. In contrast to the pre-modern times, men and women are equal with each other; yet – as we will see in more detail later – the terms of such equality are defined by men. Consider also the relation of lord to serf in feudalism or master to slave in ancient Greece or Rome; neither socioeconomic order allowed for claims of equality. In modernity, by contrast, capitalist and worker, or employer and

employee are equal with each other. We must notice, however, that it is in their very equality that they are unequal; it is the capitalist or the employer that ultimately defines the terms of equality (obtained in contract). Finally, and more broadly speaking, notice that the equality assured by law can provide no guarantee against the relation of power; although the powerful are (ideally) circumscribed by the equality under law, nonetheless, the powerful are those who write and enforce the law. We should grasp, then, that neither equality nor reciprocity implies a symmetry – power is both consistent with and essential to a variety of modern systems that propound equality.

6- The Clarification of Priority of Opposition to Diversity

It is the transition from diversity to opposition that makes Hegel's logic of essence the ontology of power. In the relation of diversity, all individuals share a common substratum, and the differences remain only *external* to the constitution of individuals. Hegel's critique of diversity shows that such common substratum that is shared by all individuals is always already the product of the relation of opposition, and that the relation of opposition is principally a relation of power. The relation of opposition is more essential than the relation of diversity, since it is through opposition that individuals achieve their own identity, and become thus what they are. In this section, I further clarify what it means that opposition is more essential than diversity. In order to do this, I explain Benedetto Croce's objection to Hegel on this point, and answer it (6-1). Then, I indicate how Hegel's logical critique of diversity is helpful to develop a critique of the ideology of pluralism in the current so-called "multiculturalist" society (6-2).

6-1- Benedetto Croce's Objection: Hegel's Confusion of Diversity and Opposition

In *What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, Croce identifies the source of what is dead in Hegel in “confusion of the theory of the different and the theory of opposites”, which “produces the gravest results; that is to say, from it arises ... all that is philosophically erroneous in the system of Hegel.” (1915:99) According to Croce, reality, which is a pluralistic order, is constituted by the principle of difference. The problem of Hegel is that he forcefully applies his dialectical method, which according to Croce is based on the relation of opposition, to everything, including to those parts of reality that do not have an antagonistic character. Croce does not deny that there exists antagonism and opposition in reality; what he denies is the universality of antagonism and opposition. Thus he writes, “the organism is the struggle of life against death; but the members of the organism are not therefore at strife with one another, hand against foot, or eye against hand” (ibid:93).

Croce's criticism is acute, yet misses what Hegel is getting at. Hegel never denies that there is a relation of diversity in reality. As I have already indicated, his point is rather that the “truth” of diversity is opposition, and that it is opposition that is “deeper” and “more essential” than diversity.¹⁰¹ Opposition is deeper and more essential than diversity, since it is through opposition that individuals can be determinately identified; diversity always remains under-determinate. Consider, as one important example, what

¹⁰¹Cf. Charles Taylor's account: “But it is not Hegel's intention to claim that the notion of diversity is without application. Of course, there is a diversity of things in the world. What he does have to claim, however, is that seeing things in the world as simply diverse, involving as it does seeing them as being merely contingently related to each other, is a superficial view. Understood at a more fundamental level, each thing is what it is only in a relation of contrastive and interactive opposition with another, which is thus ‘its other’.” (1975:261)

makes the essence of the political. It is through opposition that a polity can identify itself as a polity, and that it can thus become a distinct polity in the first place. Namely, the polity becomes what it is through excluding its own personal other, while at the same time such relation of exclusion is constitutive of, and thus contained in, the said polity. Within the polity there is always diversity – diversity of, say, lifestyles, values, conceptions of good life, etc. – but such diversity is grounded on a deeper oppositional determination. (Islamic way of life is fundamentally “opposed” to *our* way of life, and thus should not be tolerated in our *otherwise* “diverse”, “pluralistic” social order.)¹⁰²

¹⁰² I am following here Carl Schmitt’s conception of the political, which he defines in oppositional terms, namely, through the opposition between friend and enemy: “The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.” (1996 [1932]: 28) There are two important similarities between Hegel’s conception of opposition and Schmitt’s conception of the political. (1) For Hegel, opposition need not be explicit, yet opposition is the ground of diversity, and, thus, diversity can always “sharpen” into opposition. Similarly, for Schmitt, what makes the essence of the political is the friend-foe opposition, but such opposition need not be always explicit. Schmitt writes, “the political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions. But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specially intense way, existentially something different and alien, *so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible*. (ibid: 27, emphasis added) (2) Hegel’s conception of the logic of essence in general, and of opposition in particular is not morally evaluative. Similarly, Schmitt’s conception of the political is not morally evaluative, it is realist through and through: “It is irrelevant here whether one rejects, accepts, or perhaps finds it an atavistic remnant of barbaric times that nations continue to group themselves according to friend and enemy, or hopes that the opposition will one day vanish from the world, or whether it is perhaps sound, for the sake of education, to fake that enemies no longer exist at all. *The concern here is neither with fictions nor with normative ideals, but with inherent reality and the real possibility of such a distinction. [Hier handelt es sich nicht um Fiktionen und Normativitäten, sondern um die seinsmäßige Wirklichkeit und die reale Möglichkeit dieser Unterscheidung.]* One may or may not share these hopes and educational ideals. But, rationally speaking, it cannot be denied that nations continue to group themselves according to the friend and enemy opposition, that the distinction still remains actual today, and that this is an ever present possibility for every people existing in the political sphere.” (ibid: 28, emphasis added).

The example of the affinity of the political to the oppositional¹⁰³ directs us to a pivotal point: Hegel's dialectical logic is not meant to apply to all spheres of reality in the same way, and to the same degree. Rather, Hegel believes, as it were, in degrees of dialecticity in reality. Opposition as the most determinate form of the determinations of reflection is the category that captures the essence of human social and political world. In the realm of nature, opposition is generally not the primarily relevant determination of reflection. In his *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel writes,

It would be unphilosophical to try to show that a form of the Concept *exists universally* in nature in the determinateness in which it is as an abstraction. Nature is rather the Idea in the element of asunderness, so that like the Understanding it, too, holds fast to the moments of the Concept in their *dispersion*, and represents them thus in reality; but in higher things the differentiated forms of the Concept are unified to the extreme of concretion.¹⁰⁴ (EnzN §312)

In so far as a natural being is not in a relation of opposition with another natural being, it cannot constitute itself as an individual proper; rather it remains “*dispersed*” [zerstreut], and thus without concrete unity. Hegel regards nature as lacking power to adequately develop itself from diversity into opposition, and, so, as “powerless” to constitute itself as a unity proper. In the *Science of Logic*, insisting on the

¹⁰³ I cannot pursue the relation of dialectical opposition and politics in more detail in this space. For a helpful discussion, see Peter Furth's “Asymmetrische Gegensätze in der Sprache der Politik” (2008 [1991]). Furth explains how “es eine gewisse Strukturähnlichkeit zwischen Dialektik und Politik gibt, insofern nämlich, als in beiden Fällen der Zusammenhang von Einheit und Gegensatz den Kern zu lösenden Probleme darstellt.” (227)

¹⁰⁴ “Eine Begriffsform so in der Natur vorhanden aufzeigen wollen, daß sie in der Bestimmtheit, wie sie als eine Abstraktion ist, *allgemein existieren* solle, wäre ein unphilosophischer Gedanke. Die Natur ist vielmehr die Idee im Elemente des Außereinander, so daß sie ebenso wie der Verstand die Begriffsmomente *zerstreut* festhält und in Realität darstellt, aber in den höheren Dingen die unterschiedenen Begriffsformen zur höchsten Konkretion in einem vereint.” (EnzN. §312)

powerlessness of nature, Hegel writes, “it is the impotence of nature that it cannot adhere to and exhibit the rigor of the Concept”. [Es ist dies die Ohnmacht der Natur , die Strenge des Begriffs nicht festhalten und darstellen zu können.] (*WdL* II:282, *SL* 607).

Thus, contrary to Croce, for Hegel, there is no confusion between diversity and opposition. Diversity and opposition both exist; yet especially in social and political world, there is an objective tendency for diversity to “sharpen” into opposition, and so, opposition should be conceived as “more essential” than diversity. The transition from diversity to opposition is motivated by the by quest for “further determination” [Fortbestimmung] in order to abolish the indeterminacy inherent in the relation of diversity. I have explained the transition from diversity to opposition before, but I would like to emphasize that Hegel’s argument for the priority of opposition to diversity is not limited to the few pages of the chapter of determinations of reflection in the logic of essence. The main argumentative work about why external relations cannot be adequately determining occurs throughout logic of being, and that argument is already presupposed in the logic of essence.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, and this is even more important, the priority of opposition to diversity is not limited to the discussions in the logic. Hegel’s philosophy, in general, is a philosophy of negation and negativity. One prominent feature of negation in all its variations is contrastive exclusion. The relation of opposition expresses the truth of contrastive exclusion more adequately than the relation of diversity; since the relata in

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Robert Wallace’s account: “Thus, although Hegel intends his discussion of diversity and its transition into opposition to serve as a critique of what we might call a common sense ontology of diverse entities [...] it should not be surprising if his critique is not enough, by itself, to persuade advocates of common sense ontologies to follow Hegel by substituting “opposition” for the diversity to which they are presently wedded; for they may well not understand that diversity in the way that Hegel, coming from the doctrine of being, understands it. To stand a decent chance of persuading them, one would have to bring to bear the whole argument of the doctrine of being (as well as the first two chapters of essence).” (Wallace 2005:180).

the relation of opposition are *solely* constructed through moments that mutually exclude each other.

6-2- The Critique of Diversity as the Critique of Pluralism in Capitalism

The fact of “pluralism” and diversity is much celebrated in contemporary culture, and is accordingly reflected in contemporary political philosophy. Rawls, to give one prominent example, takes the fact of pluralism in contemporary society as *given*, and *then* searches for a political basis, a state, that can legitimately use coercive power to maintain the unity of society. Rawls does not adequately address the more fundamental question: what are the preconditions of pluralism in contemporary society? When he asks such a question, he reduces the answer to the autonomy of individuals – an answer that accords to his ultimately atomistic social ontology – or to some vague conception of public political culture. From a logical point of view, pluralism corresponds to the relation of diversity in Hegel and implies (1) that individuals are *like* each other, insofar as they are human beings, or citizens of a state. Insofar as they are like each other, they must be treated equally; (2) that individuals are *unlike* each other, insofar as they have different religion, ethnicity, race, culture, food preference, etc. The political state should be indifferent to the differences of individuals, and should provide a milieu in which each individual can exercise his or her specific difference; (3) that the likeness and unlikeness of individuals is externally added together. The internal bond between such likeness and such unlikeness is not, need not be, grasped. Obviously, as stated above, Hegel’s logic of essence does not deny the fact of diversity and pluralism; but it holds that such diversity and pluralism presupposes a more determinate relation, the relation of opposition, which

is at the same time “deeper” and “more essential”. For Hegel, the “truth” of pluralism is the relation of opposition; it is opposition that grounds pluralism and makes it possible. Quite in the spirit of Hegel’s logic, Adorno in the sixties, in the age of proliferation of diversity in cultural products and life styles, warns his students that,

The term ‘pluralism’ is acquiring increasing currency in our own time. It is presumably the ideology describing the centrifugal tendencies of a society that threatens to disintegrate into unreconciled groups under the pressure of its own principles. This is then represented as if it were a state of reconciliation in which people lived together in a harmony while in reality society is full of power struggles... I would like to recommend that you adopt an extremely wary attitude towards the concept of pluralism, which...is preached at us on every street corner. To transfigure and ideologize the elements of discontinuity or of social antagonisms in this way is a part of the general ideological trend. In the same way, it is very characteristic of our age that the very factors that threaten to blow up the entire world are represented as the peaceful coexistence of human beings who have become reconciled and have outgrown their conflicts. This is a tendency which barely conceals the fact that mankind is beginning to despair of finding a solution to its disagreements. (*NS-V* 13: 140, *HF*: 95)

Note that Adorno’s critique of pluralism is not that pluralism is *per se* bad or wrong. He is, of course, not aspiring for an authoritarian state that ruthlessly controls the lives of individuals. His criticism is rather that the institutional arrangements in capitalist societies are based on power-relations of opposition and antagonism. Thus, the apparent pluralism only masks the power-relations, thereby contributing to their perpetuation. His criticism is not that there *should* not be pluralism, but that there *cannot* be genuine pluralism within capitalism. Moreover – and this point is important – in contrast to Rawls, for Adorno the source of cohesion in capitalist societies is not a shared political culture, underneath or alongside the plurality of worldviews and lifestyles, but contradictorily the

very relations of opposition that rend the society¹⁰⁶. This is very similar to Hegel's logic of essence, where unity (in the figure of contradiction) is achieved through opposition. All this means that for Adorno resisting the ideology of pluralism is not resisting pluralism per se; it is rather resisting a society, whose structure accords to the logic of essence.

7- Marx's Logical Conception of Opposition between Capital and Labor

According to Marx, capitalism is based on two essential instances of relation of opposition: (1) The opposition between exchange-value and use-value, and (2) the opposition between capital and labor. In both, there is an essential relation of domination: In the first, it is exchange-value that dominates use-value, and in the second it is capital that dominates labor. In this dissertation, for the sake of space, I only focus on the opposition between capital and labor.

¹⁰⁶ In another series of lectures, Adorno illustrates the idea of unity and self-preservation of society through contradiction in the following way: "The essence of this [Adorno's] model of an antagonistic society is that it is not a society *with* contradictions or *despite* its contradictions, but *by virtue of* its contradictions. In other words, a society based on profit necessarily contains this division in society because of the objective existence of the profit motive. This profit motive which divides society and potentially tears it apart is also the factor by means of which society reproduces its own existence. To remind you of an even crasser fact, likewise by way of illustration, it is probably true that today almost the entire economy can be sustained only because a very large part of the social product is devoted to the production of weapons of mass destruction, in particular, nuclear weapons and everything connected with them [...]. This means that the ability of our society to withstand crises, an ability that is generally held to be one of its finest achievements, is directly linked to the growth in its potential for technological self-destruction." (NS-V II: 20, *Lectures on Negative Dialectics*: 9).

7-1- The Opposition between Capital and Labor in the Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844

Throughout his career, Marx conceives of the relation of capital and labor as a relation of opposition. In this section, I focus on Marx's early conception in the *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844). Marx's political economy in this period is rather crude and schematic. The intricate conceptual distinctions between abstract labor and concrete labor, between labor and labor-power, which are foundational for his later work in *Capital*, are still absent in this period; so is his complex conception of labor theory of value, which at the same time includes a monetary conception of value. Be that as it may, at the most basic logical level, the contours of his political economy arguably remains the same. As he profusely – and explicitly – uses Hegel's concepts in his youth, it is easier to trace the Hegelian origins of his thought in this period. There is a passage in the said manuscripts in which Marx expresses the relation of “private property” (or “capital”) and “labor” with some key words:

The character of *private property* is expressed by labor, capital, and the relations between these two. The movement through which these constituents have to pass is:

First. Unmediated or mediated unity of the two.

Capital and labor are at first still united. Then, though separated and estranged, they reciprocally develop and promote each other as *positive* conditions.

[*Second.*] *The two in opposition*, reciprocally excluding each other. The worker knows the capitalist as his own non-being, and vice versa: each tries to rob the other of his being.

[*Third.*] *Opposition of each to itself*. Capital=stored-up labor=labor....

*Hostile reciprocal opposition.*¹⁰⁷ (MEW 40:529, MECW 3:289)

Although these notes are abstract and schematic, they contain the kernel of Marx's critique of labor relations in capitalism. According to Marx, private property and labor in some archaic pre-historical period are still united; those who work do own the property that they produce ("unmediated unity"). Then, comes the period (logical or historical) that private property and labor are in a harmonious relationship with each other; each is necessary for the other, each cooperates with the other in a way that benefits both ("mediated unity"). In capitalism, however, the relation of capital and labor is one of antagonistic reciprocal dependence and exclusion ("hostile reciprocal opposition"); such antagonistic exclusion that simultaneously constitutes each as a self-contradiction ("opposition of each to itself").

In order to understand why in capitalism, there cannot be a harmony of interests between capital and labor, we need to know that Marx's account of capitalism is based on labor theory of value, namely, the theory that the economic value of commodities is *solely* derived from the labor that is put into their production. Simply *owning* means of production does not create *any* value. It is only labor that creates value. Moreover, even the value of the means of production that are owned by the capitalists are *already* the "stored up" past labor of the workers. In this economic setting based on private ownership of means of production, the commodities, although being produced by the

¹⁰⁷ "Das Verhältnis des *Privateigentums* ist Arbeit, Kapital und die Beziehung beider. Die Bewegung, die diese Glieder zu durchlaufen haben, sind: *Erstens. unmittelbare* oder *vermittelte Einheit beider*. Kapital und Arbeit erst noch vereint; dann zwar getrennt und entfremdet, aber sich wechselseitig als *positive* Bedingungen hehend und fördernd. [*Zweitens*] *Gegensatz beider*. Schließen sich wechselseitig aus; der Arbeiter weiß den Kapitalisten und umgekehrt als sein Nichtdasein; jeder sucht dem andren sein Dasein zu entreißen. [*Drittens*] *Gegensatz* jedes *gegen* sich selbst. Kapital = aufgehäufter Arbeit = Arbeit... *Feindlicher wechselseitiger Gegensatz.*"

workers, from the very moment of their production, belong to the capitalists. Labor, therefore, *constitutes* capital, which at the same time *excludes* it from itself. In Hegel's language, labor is the "negative" that primarily exists for capital (the "positive"), and can thus constitute itself *only* in this negative relation. Marx writes,

As soon, therefore, as it occurs to capital (whether from necessity or caprice) no longer to be for the worker, he himself is no longer for himself: he has *no* work, hence *no* wages, and since he has no existence *as a human being* but only *as a worker*, he can go and bury himself, starve to death, etc. The worker exists as a worker only when he exists *for himself* as capital; and he exists as capital only when some *capital* exists *for him*. The existence of capital is *his* existence, his *life*; as it determines the tenor of his life in a manner indifferent to him. (*MEW* 40:523, *MECW* 3:283)

All these fit well with Marx's claim that in capitalism, *all* labor – and not only the labor that is done in assembly lines in sweatshops – is "alienated"; since the institutional arrangement in capitalism is such that those who work do not own the means of production, and therefore the products of their labor immediately belong to those own the means of production.¹⁰⁸

It is helpful to compare Marx's conception of the relation of capital and labor with current dominant discussions in distributive justice. In general, the theories of distributive justice presuppose the wealth of society as *given*, and *then* try to come up with some criteria of fairness, according to which the presupposed wealth should be distributed

¹⁰⁸ Marx's conception of the antagonistic relation of capital and labor in capitalism does not exclusively rely on labor theory of value. In her *An Essay on Marxian Economics* (1942), the Cambridge economist Joan Robinson argues that Marx's labor theory of value is untenable, yet his account of "exploitation" – the view that the products of labor are systematically robbed from the workers by the capitalists – remains true all the same. Moreover, the nature of Marx's theory of value in his later work is highly controversial, inasmuch as some people even deny that Marx in *Capital* had a labor theory of value at all (Backhaus 1997, Morishima 1973).

among the members of society. Therefore, in theories of distributive justice the statement “A has more money than B” can only be criticized from moral grounds – there is no account that systematically links the wealth of A to the poverty of B. Marx, however, shifts the main question from *distribution* of wealth to the *production* of wealth. Within capitalism, wealth is always produced by a group of people only to be expropriated by another group. According to Marx,

The opposition between *lack of property* and *property*, so long as it is not comprehended as the opposition of *labor and capital*, still remains an indifferent opposition, not grasped in its *active connection*, in its *internal* relation, not yet grasped as a *contradiction* (MEW 40:533, MECW 3:294-5).

In theories of distributive justice, the wealth of A and B is only a matter of external comparison, as a matter of Hegel’s relation of diversity, which Marx in the quoted passage calls “indifferent opposition”. For Marx, however, there is an “active connection” [tätige Beziehung], an “internal relation” [inneres Verhältnis] between wealth of A and poverty of B, such that each is constituted *solely* through the other, thereby forming a relation of opposition and “contradiction”. In other words, in Marx’s account, the statement “A has more money than B” – as Jon Elster argues – is tantamount to the statement “A *exploits* B” or “A’s wealth is the *cause* of B’s poverty”.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Elster’s comments on the same quoted passage of Marx (1985:93ff). He also makes a helpful reference to Marx’s later “Marginal Notes on Adolph Wagner” where Marx, in passing, distinguishes between “to stand in a relationship” [in einem Verhältnis zu stehen] and “to relate actively” [sich aktiv zu verhalten] (ibid: 64ff). Although Elster, who endeavors to systematically undermine Marx’s heritage from Hegel’s logic, does not state it, it can arguably be shown that the former is similar to Hegel’s relation of diversity, and the latter to the relation of opposition.

7-2- Klaus Hartmann's Objection

According to Klaus Hartmann (1970: 164ff), Marx's "abstract" analysis of the relation of capital and labor, which is based on the logic of essence, does not allow any room for the "concrete plurality" of the relation of capital and labor; such "concrete plurality" through which the initial relation of opposition may eventually develop into an "equilibrium" or a "balance".¹¹⁰ We can understand the said "concrete plurality" in two ways, namely (1) empirical, and (2) theoretical.

(1) According to Hartmann, there can be, indeed are, empirical situations that capital and labor constitute a harmonious relationship with each other, in a way that benefits both. For example (my example), some argue that in those underdeveloped countries where the rate of unemployment is high, the investment of foreign capital is beneficial for both labor and capital: it is beneficial for labor, since people would get a job (although poorly paid), which otherwise they wouldn't; it is beneficial for capital, since it can hire workers with lower wages than in the developed countries, thereby increasing its profit. The relation of capital and labor, in this way, is not anymore a relation of antagonism, but a relation of mutual cooperation.

(2) According to Hartmann, once we take into account the "totality of social relations" in modern society, which is consistent with the rule of private property, the initial relation of opposition can indeed be "mitigated", "domesticated", or altogether

¹¹⁰ "Der Einwand ... lautet, ob das Privateigentum oder Kapital sich nicht mit seinem Widerpart zu einem Ausgleich entwickelt oder ob es sich nicht bei Berücksichtigung der sozialen Pluralität von Eigentümern modifizieren und domestizieren, kurz, ob der Fortgang der Bewegung dann nicht ein anderer sein würde. Dieser Gedanke einer Modifikation des Wesens durch die konkrete Pluralität, durch die Gesamtheit der Eigentumsverhältnisse – wir können auch sagen: durch ihr System, derart, daß sich durchaus auch theoretische und nicht nur empirische Aussagen darüber machen lassen –, ein solcher Gedanke... findet sich nicht." (1970:164)

“modified” into other sorts of relations. Most importantly, the political state, through regulation of labor-market and imposition of tax, can implement strong redistributive programs that eventually would benefit the workers. It is not clear, when such measures do change the status of workers, why we must still think of the relation of capital and labor in terms of a relation of opposition. From the logical point of view, Hartmann holds, Marx’s analysis is based on the logic of essence, which is the logic of alienation and opposition. Contrary to Marx, however, the intervention of the modern state abolishes such alienation and opposition, and implements the transition to the logic of Concept, in which all individuals equally attain the status of “concrete universality.” The logic of essence, therefore, is not but a transitory stage that is superseded in the logic of Concept.

Hartmann’s arguments, although have a strong intuitive appeal, are not effective against Marx.¹¹¹ Regarding (1): The variation of “empirical” setting does not affect the “logical” truth of the relation of capital and labor. From a Marxist standpoint, which is consistent with Hegel’s logic of essence, such variety in the empirical world is only a *seeming*, an *illusion* that conceals the more fundamental “logical” state of affairs. No matter how the empirical setting changes in capitalism, it does not touch the basic point that still it is the workers that produce value, which at the same time is expropriated from them by capital.

¹¹¹ Hartmann himself is aware that these arguments are not effective against Marx. Yet, he regards the sealed “transcendental” character of Marx’s argument, which makes it immune to such criticism, as a reason that Marx’s argument as a whole is a *petitio principii*: Marx *presupposes* that capitalism is based on the logic of essence, only to *prove* that it is so. “Die [Marxsche] Theorie läßt keinen anderen Weg offen als den der Begriffsbewegung, der Entfaltung der Untugenden des Wesens, d.h. seiner Negativität. Die Theorie ist Funktion desjenigen Prinzips, das das Gewünschte zu zeigen gestattet.” (ibid:165). I cannot discuss this point in this space, but the circularity of transcendental arguments does not necessarily mean that they are *petitio principii*, or at least so is the case with Marx’s analysis.

Regarding (2): Hartmann's objection is based on the Hegelian idea that the political state in modernity is able to successfully tame and contain the sphere of civil society, thereby providing a milieu in which each individual would enjoy freedom to the same extent that other individuals do. In this space, I cannot discuss in any detail Marx's critique of Hegel's conception of state in capitalism. For Marx, the political state is only a reflection of the antagonistic structure of the sphere of civil society, and maintains and stabilizes such antagonism. For Marx, the "political" freedom and equality that obtains through the state is nothing but another symptom of "alienation" of life in civil society. It indicates that the antagonism inherent in the "real" or the "material" life of people cannot be solved, and has to be seemingly annulled in the "ideal" world of politics. Moreover – and this is another point – even if the state manages to considerably *redistribute* wealth, it cannot change the mode of *production* of wealth, which solely obtains through the antagonism between capital and labor. Thus, Marx unequivocally argues against the motto of "equalization of classes" that had gained momentum in the liberal socialists of his time:

The "equalization of classes", literally interpreted, comes to the "*harmony of capital and labor*" so persistently preached by the bourgeois socialists. It is not the logically impossible "*equalization of classes*", but the historically necessary, superseding "*abolition of classes*", this true secret of the proletarian movement, which forms the great aim of the International Workers' Association (*MEW* 16:349, *MECW* 21:46)

This discussion makes clear both the importance and the limits of the logic, when it comes to think about social issues. Logic is, relatively speaking, *both* independent from *and* dependent on social reality. It is independent, insofar as it provides the foundation for the social reality; it captures what is "actual" in social reality independent of the manifold

empirical manifestation. It is dependent, insofar as it is already informed by social and political arguments that are not necessarily logical in character. It is not for logical reasons that, for Marx, the transition from the logic of essence to the logic of Concept cannot transpire; rather the social and historical institutions in capitalism are such that they would not allow such a transition. It is not the “matter of the logic” [die Sache der Logik] that defines the social world, Marx emphasizes, but the “logic of the matter” [die Logik der Sache] (*MEW* 1:216, *MECW* 3:17-8).

8- MacKinnon’s Conception of Genders in terms of Opposition

I have briefly indicated that de Beauvoir’s conception of the relation of men and women has a close affinity with Hegel’s relation of opposition. In this section, I focus on Catharine MacKinnon’s conception of gender formation, as primarily explained in her essay, “Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination” (1987a). MacKinnon explicitly articulates the relation of men and women in terms of power, and radically pushes de Beauvoir’s argument to its logical conclusion. As we will see, MacKinnon’s theory neatly fits with Hegel’s conception of the relation of opposition, as I have presented it. Interestingly, MacKinnon does not invoke Hegel’s logic in this essay, nor – as far as I can verify – does she explicitly discuss the logic in any other of her works. In the following, I will give a close reading of MacKinnon’s essay, and I make copious references to the essay so as to avoid *forcing* a Hegelian interpretation on her work.

MacKinnon begins her essay with the query, “what is a gender question”¹¹² a

¹¹² MacKinnon does not subscribe to the distinction between “sex” (that is based on biology) and “gender” (that is socially constituted), which is of pivotal importance for many second-wave

question of?” This query, she holds, can be answered in two ways: in terms of (1) sameness and difference or (2) dominance (ibid: 32). Understanding gender issues in terms of sameness and difference is the prevailing approach, against which MacKinnon offers her own approach of dominance.

(1) According to the sameness and difference approach, “sex *is* a difference, a division, a distinction, beneath which lies a stratum of human commonality, sameness” (ibid: 33). This approach undergirds the existing liberal legal and moral framework: as long as men and women are equal, the law should be gender neutral, disregarding the gender of the person in question; and as long as women are different from men the law should accommodate the difference, and should take an affirmative action to compensate for it. According to MacKinnon, there is a fundamental flaw in this approach:

Under the sameness standard, women are measured according to our [women’s] correspondence with man, our equality judged by our proximity to his measure. Under the difference standard, we [women] are measured according to our lack of correspondence with him, our womanhood judged by our distance from his measure. Gender neutrality is thus simply the male standard. (ibid: 34)

There is, in other words, no neutral point of view from which it can be judged in what respect women and men are the same, and in what respects they are different. Rather, that supposedly neutral standpoint is the male standpoint. MacKinnon gives a poignant example to illustrate her point: In anatomy classes in medical school, a male body is considered to be *the* human body, and the additional organs that women have are studied in ob/gyn (ibid: 34). Similarly, according to MacKinnon, sports are generally defined with reference to men’s physiology, car and health insurance coverage with reference to

feminists, and uses the terms “sex” and “gender” interchangeably. For her, there is no brute natural fact that defines sex; sex is socially mediated through and through. (See Allen (2014))

men's needs, and "workplace expectations and successful career patterns" with reference to men's biographies (ibid: 36). There is no such neutral standpoint for the evaluation of so-called successful women; these women are, in general, those who have been able to construct a C.V. that is close to the male norm (ibid: 37). As the sameness/difference approach is blind to the "hierarchy of power" between men and women, it does not realize that "maleness is the referent for both" men and women (ibid: 34). The sameness/difference approach claims to treat men and women equally. Yet, as the criteria for such equality are defined by men, equality can never obtain. Thus, within the framework of sameness/difference, MacKinnon emphasizes, "sex equality is conceptually designed never to be achieved." (ibid: 44)

(2) In reaction to the conceptual inconsistency involved in sameness/difference approach, MacKinnon offers her own approach, according to which the question of gender is primarily the question of domination of men over women. She writes:

Gender here is a matter of dominance, not difference [...]. Another way to say that is, there would be no such thing as what we know as sex difference [...], were it not for male dominance. Sometimes people ask me, 'Does that mean you think there is no difference between women and men?' The only way that I know how to answer that is: of course there is; the difference is that men have power, and women do not. (1987b: 51)

It is power, according to MacKinnon, which through constructing social reality "derivatively" produces the so-called sameness and difference between sexes. For MacKinnon, the difference between men and women is not a difference that designates an equal value, but is a difference constituted by the relation of power. For her, the relation of power precedes gender: It is not the case that *first* there are self-standing genders, upon which the relation of power is *afterwards* superimposed; rather, gender

from the beginning is, constituted by power.¹¹³ “Gender might not even code as difference, might not mean distinction epistemologically, were it not for its consequences for social power” (1987a:40).

These two approaches in understanding social reality have radically different practical significance. From the point of view of sameness/difference approach, “sex inequality would be a problem of mere sexism, of mistaken differentiation, of inaccurate categorization of individuals.” (1978a: 42) In other words, in the sameness/difference approach the status quo as a whole is regarded as just, as the standard, and the issue is merely identifying the aberrant forms of sex discrimination and sexism. From the point of view of dominance approach, MacKinnon believes, the sameness/difference approach “invisibly and uncritically accepts the arrangements under male supremacy”. In this sense, she concludes, the sameness/difference approach is “masculinist”, although it might be expressed by women themselves (ibid: 43). In contrast, for the dominance approach the issue of inequality is not an idiosyncrasy or an exception. Rather, the inequality of power is that which makes genders what they are. Thus, the dominance approach focuses on the “systemic dominance” of men over women. Correspondingly, its focus is on “politics”, whose horizon is changing the *totality* of relations, not the individual cases of supposedly explicit sexism.

The resemblance of MacKinnon to Hegel is obvious. I will content myself with a brief summation of her points appropriately couched in Hegel’s language: (1) For

¹¹³ MacKinnon gives a metaphorical account of sex differentiation: “On the first day that matters, dominance was achieved, probably by force. By the second day, division along the same lines had to be relatively firmly in place. On the third day, if not sooner, differences were demarcated, together with social systems to exaggerate them in perception and in fact, because the systematically differential delivery of benefits and deprivations required making no mistakes about who was who.” (1987a:40)

MacKinnon gender is not a biological entity, originating from some *thing* like DNA, brain, hormones, genitalia, etc., but is fundamentally *relational*. (2) The sameness/difference approach regards the relation between male and female as an instance of the relation of *diversity*. According to this approach, men and women are *in some respects* equal, and *in some other respects* unequal. This is an instance of relation of *indifference* and *externality*, where each of the two relata ultimately exists independently from the other. (3) The dominance approach understands the relation between men and women as an instance of relation of *opposition*, where the *positive* is male, and the *negative* is female. The very categories of male and female are *contradictorily* derived from the relation of power of male over female. (4) The relation of dominance of male over female has an in-built relation of *equality* as its moment, insofar as male and female are equal with each other, obviously, under the rules that male sets.

9- Conclusion: Opposition vs. Recognition

According to Honneth's "normative reconstruction" of Hegel's social and political philosophy, in bourgeois-capitalist social order the basic form of social relation that obtains between individuals is recognition. For Honneth, recognition is essentially symmetrical, and the asymmetries of power are mere aberrations from the recognitive state. For him, the symmetry involved in recognition renders individuals equal with each other. Although there are always cases of inequality, equality remains real. In the view that I have developed through Hegel's conception of determinations of reflection, things look quite differently. In this view, the basic form of social relation that obtains between individuals is opposition. This relation is essentially asymmetrical, and based on power.

There is equality involved in the relation of opposition, yet the measure of such equality is always established by those who are already in power. This equality, therefore, can never be a true equality. It is rather a constitutive illusion that conceals the relations of power. Corresponding to these two ways of understanding social ontology, there are two kinds of politics. In Honneth's approach, the totality of the bourgeois-capitalist social order is fine and healthy, and there is only need for piecemeal reform, aimed at correcting the deviant "social pathologies." In the view that I have offered, the problems are the constitutive social relations themselves, and they need to be addressed at the root level.¹¹⁴

A question remains, however. If it is a logical requirement that the basic social relation be opposition, can there be any hope for emancipation at all? That is, can there be any hope to have a future society that is truly based on the symmetrical relation of recognition? Does Hegel's logic teach us, to invoke a phrase from Adorno, that a "pre-established disharmony" governs society? (*GS* 6:25) In answering this question, I would like to emphasize that there are (at least) two ways of reading Hegel's logic: (1) as a theory of purely a priori categories that does not change across history; (2) as a theory that aims to "reconstruct" social reality in the bourgeois-capitalist social order at the categorial and logical level. In the Introduction, I have argued how I opt for the second reading. I hold that the "structure" of bourgeois-capitalist social order is based on the relation of opposition, and such oppositional structure cannot possibly accommodate the "ethical norms" of the symmetrical relation of recognition. That the structure of society is based on opposition, however, is a historical fact. Through radical change in the very structure of the current society, there *may* be a possibility of the formation of a new

¹¹⁴ See the Conclusion of the dissertation for a more elaborate discussion.

society, which would embody a radically different social ontology. Indeed, it *may* be possible that “in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class oppositions”, we can collectively build “an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all” (*MEW* 4:482, *MECW* 6:507).

Part III: The Logic of Totality

Chapter 3: Totality as Absolute Power

The infinite weak point in every critical position (and I would like to tell you that I include my own here) is that when confronted with such criticism, Hegel simply has the more powerful argument. This is because there is no other world than the one in which we live, or at least we have no reliable knowledge of any alternative despite all our radar screens and giant radio telescopes. So that we shall always be told: everything you are, everything you have, you owe, we owe to this odious totality, even though we cannot deny that it is an odious and abhorrent totality. (Adorno, *HF* (2006:47), *NS-V* 13:72)

In short, man, the lord of his creation, appears as the servant of that creation. (Karl Marx, *Excerpts from James Mill's Elements of Political Economy* (MEW 40:451, MECW 3:217))

1- Against Recognition-Hegel; For Substance-Hegel

It is not an exaggeration to claim that almost all recent major attempts at “re-actualization” of Hegel’s political philosophy especially in the Anglophone world have aimed to

accommodate him to liberalism. It is true that Hegel is not regarded as a conventional liberal philosopher, who would base his theory on some given conception of human-nature, or some consequentialist argument based on an account of instrumental reason; nonetheless, it is strongly believed that Hegel provides an “alternative” way for justification of liberal social and political order¹¹⁵ (Pippin: 2007).

The major concept used to reconstruct Hegel as a philosopher of liberalism is the concept of “recognition”. Such reconstruction occurs along two lines: (1) The process of recognition (or “communicative freedom”) logically exists prior the individuals, and constitutes them as being equal and free. (2) The relation of recognition is anchored in, and supported by the major social institutions of capitalist modernity, namely, the nuclear family, the market economy, and the political state. Through participating in these social institutions, which are dubbed as “the spheres of recognition” (Honneth 2003:143), individuals are able to recognize each other, and be recognized by each other, thereby forming and promoting their own individuality, as well as the individuality of the others. (Indeed, having so much trust in the modern institutions, Honneth unabashedly states that his overall task is “to interpret bourgeois-capitalist society as an institutionalized recognition order” (ibid:138))

We can interpret the above two claims about recognition as explaining two forms of “symmetrical” or “horizontal” relation: (1) The symmetrical or horizontal relation *between* individuals, (2) the symmetrical or horizontal relationship *between* individuals

¹¹⁵ By liberalism here, I mean a theory that presupposes individuals to be equal and free, and to be bearer of certain inalienable human rights. The task of liberal political philosophy is then to construct a political organization that secures the already presupposed equality, freedom and human rights for individuals.

and institutions. The idea of (2) is this: social institutions are to a considerable extent malleable to the action of individuals. The institutions do not really “force” individuals to abide by their logic; but they provide sets of “orientation” for individuals to act (Pinkard’s phrase 2010:137). Individuals thus can step back from the institutions, reflect on them, and act according to what *they* (individuals) deem to be good and desirable¹¹⁶. In so doing, therefore, individuals can reciprocally change the institutions. Thus, the dialectical relation between individuals in (1) is transformed into “a playing out of the moral dialectic of the universal [i.e. institutions] and the particular” (Honneth *ibid*:152) in (2), thereby re-enforcing and concretizing the already existing horizontal relation between individuals.

Interpreting Hegel through the concept of recognition makes Hegel a liberal philosopher, insofar as it regards individuals in capitalism to be –although in a roundabout way, through recognition – equal and free. Granted that the philosophers of recognition agree that the current conjuncture in bourgeois-capitalist order is far from realizing the recognitive relation, yet they stress that recognition is the (ethical) norm underlying this social order, and is indeed already embedded (and “actual”) in it. One of my aims in this dissertation has been to show that no matter the extent of reform, the rules and regularities (i.e. the non-ethical structural norms) that govern the capitalist order cannot possibly accommodate a recognitive relation between individuals. From the logical point of view, in Chapter Two I argued against (1). I showed that for Hegel in the logic of essence the most fundamental form of relation between individuals is not the relation of symmetrical recognition, but the relation of opposition, which is essentially

¹¹⁶ Pinkard is well aware that this “orientation” model is Kantian; nonetheless, he uses it to explain Hegel.

asymmetrical. To complete the argument, in this chapter I aim to undermine (2). Namely, I will show that the relation of social institutions and individuals in capitalism is not in any sense symmetrical, but emphatically asymmetrical. More precisely, I will argue that the social institutions in capitalism and especially the “totality”¹¹⁷ thereof do not provide points of “orientation” for individuals to act; rather, the institutions “coerce” individuals – on pain of perishing – to do what they (individuals) need to do.

My focus is on Hegel’s logic of essence where Hegel conceives of totality in terms of “substance” [Substanz], which exerts “absolute power” [absolute Macht] over individuals, who remain its “accidents”. The strongly holist argument that Hegel advances in the logic of essence is a good reason that the philosophers of recognition emphatically dissociate Hegel’s political philosophy from his logic. (Honneth clearly regards the basic presupposition of any attempt to re-actualize Hegel’s political philosophy to “our own post-metaphysical standards of rationality” to be discarding the logic altogether (2001:5)). Nonetheless, it is absolutely undeniable that Hegel himself regards the logic to constitute the ground of the *Philosophy of Right* (*GPR* §2, §31, §33)¹¹⁸. In what is without doubt one of the most important parts of the book, the beginning of the ethical life [Sittlichkeit] (*GPR* §142 through §158, also *EnzG* §513 through §517), Hegel repeatedly and clearly identifies the ethical life with “substance”. These passages are very difficult, one could say even impossible, to be squared with liberalism. Here Hegel claims that the “substance” of society is self-standing and independent of individuals, that individuals are mere “epiphenomena” of the totality of society, that the social institutions are “ethical powers” that govern the lives of

¹¹⁷ I use the terms “whole” and “totality” interchangeably, as Hegel, Marx and Adorno do.

¹¹⁸ See the Introduction for a more detailed discussion of the relation of logic to politics in Hegel.

individuals such that individuals necessarily “disappear” if they do not follow the rules and regularities of the totality of society. Here are some typical passages:

The fact that the ethical sphere is the *system* of these determinations of the Idea constitutes its *rationality*. In this way, the ethical sphere is freedom, or the will, which has being in and for itself as objectivity, as a circle of necessity whose moments are the *ethical powers*, which govern the lives of individuals. In these individuals – who are accidental to them – these powers have their representation, phenomenal shape, and actuality. [Kreis der Notwendigkeit, dessen Momente die *sittlichen Mächte* sind, welche das Leben der Individuen regieren und in diesen als ihren Akzidenzen ihre Vorstellung, erscheinende Gestalt und Wirklichkeit haben.]

Addition. Since the determinations of ethics constitute the concept of freedom, they are the substantiality or universal essence of individuals, who are related to them merely as accidents. Whether the individual exists or not is a matter of indifference to objective ethical life, which alone has permanence and is the power by which the lives of individuals are governed. Ethical life has therefore been represented to nations as eternal justice, or as gods who have being in and for themselves, and in relation to whom the vain pursuits of individuals are merely a play of the waves. (*GPR* §145)

And:

In this way, ethical substantiality has attained its right, and the latter has attained validity. That is, the self-will of the individual, and his own conscience in its attempt to exist for itself and in opposition to the ethical substantiality, have disappeared [verschwunden] (*GPR* §152).

Faced with such pivotal and unequivocal passages that reveal “illiberal” views of Hegel, essentially two approaches are taken by the philosophers of recognition: (1) One is adopted by Habermas (1973), Theunissen (1982), Hösle (1987), and earlier Honneth (1996), according to which Hegel in his Jena period developed a “dialogic” theory of intersubjectivity and recognition, but then abandoned it in his Berlin period in the

Philosophy of Right for a “monological” theory based on metaphysics of substance, and such a move is a “Verfallgeschichte” (Theunissen’s phrase), a decadence that must be repudiated. (2) One is adopted by later Honneth (2000) and Pippin (2008), among others, who argue that Hegel’s theory of horizontal recognition and intersubjectivity is still pivotal in the *Philosophy of Right*, and such passages as the quoted one must be simply ignored in favor of some other (much less explicit) passages that support horizontal conception of recognition.

By rejecting or ignoring Hegel’s logic of substance, the philosophers of recognition, in effect, discard what I believe constitutes *the* main aspect of Hegel’s revolution in modern social and political philosophy. It is exactly through conceiving of society as substance that Hegel radically departs from the tradition of liberalism in general, and of social contract theory in particular. The philosophers of recognition are wary to use the category of substance, presumably because they think conceiving of society in terms of substance automatically implicates the *endorsement* of the notion that individuals are mere accidents, and that as accidents they can be simply replaced by other individuals. Now there is no doubt that, in conformity to his project of legitimation of bourgeois-capitalist society in the *Philosophy of Right*¹¹⁹, Hegel in that book uses the concept of totality or substance *affirmatively*. To clarify, although Hegel conceives of the ethical life as substance for which individuals remains accidents, nonetheless, at the same time he believes that in modernity the ethical life has reached such maturity that would allow individuals to be self-determining in a genuine way. (“The right of individuals to

¹¹⁹ See the Introduction for a detailed discussion of my take on the *Philosophy of Right*.

their *particularity* is likewise contained in ethical substantiality.” *GPR* §154))¹²⁰ But one does not necessarily need to use the concept of totality affirmatively. Indeed, there is a rich tradition – initiated by Marx and continued then by Lukács and Adorno – that uses the category of substance or totality in a *critical* way.¹²¹ According to this tradition, totality provides the basis of sociality in bourgeois-capitalist social order, and, thus, should be conceived as *the* central category in social and political philosophy.¹²² As I will discuss in the Conclusion to the dissertation, the *critical* usage of the concept of substance finds support in Hegel too, but not in the *Philosophy of Right*, rather in the logic of essence of the *Science of Logic*.

In what follows, I begin with a discussion of Adorno’s conception of society as totality (Section 1), and then turn to Hegel in the rest of the chapter. Given the prevailing misconceptions of Hegel’s conception of totality, I need to discuss in detail two such misconceptions. I argue that Hegel’s totality is *not* the sum-total of all determinations, and that Hegel’s holism is *not* a part-whole holism (Section 2). Thereafter, I discuss why within the framework of the logic of essence Hegel needs the category of totality, and that the totality must be understood as “actuality” [Wirklichkeit], which is a principle at

¹²⁰ However, this point – that the subjective right of the individual is preserved in ethical life in modernity – does not mean that such a right is formed through recognitive relation. See Christoph Menke for an illuminating discussion (2009).

¹²¹ The confusion between the *critical* usage of the category of totality and the *affirmative* usage of it lies at the heart of the conservative and conformist reading of Hegel, propounded by the tradition of British Idealism (Bradley, T.H.Green, Bosanquet). A paradigmatic statement is Green’s: “To ask why I am to submit to the power of the state is to ask why I am to allow my life to be regulated by that complex institutions without which I literally should not have a life to call my own, should not be able to ask for a justification of what I am called on to do (1895:122, quoted by Pippin 1997:421).

¹²² That later Habermas and Honneth regard the central category of social and political philosophy to be recognition, rather than substance, shows the distance that they have from Adorno and Marx.

work that brings about unity and organization (Section 3). More determinately, I discuss how Hegel's totality is "substance" which is the highest and most determinate category of the logic of essence. I elaborate on Hegel's critique of Spinoza's substance, and show how this critique will be reflected in Hegel's social ontology. I also discuss what it means that Hegel's substance has "absolute power" over individuals (Section 4). Finally, I discuss the contours of a social ontology based on the logic of essence. Specially, I argue that the power of totality of society over individuals is *non-volitional* and *impersonal* (Section 5). The argument of this chapter continues in the next two chapters. In Chapter Four, I discuss Marx's conception of totality of capital, and demonstrate how it accords to Hegel's conception of substance. In Chapter Five, I discuss the dialectical interrelation of necessity and contingency in Hegel's logic of essence, and show how freedom of individuals in capitalism obtains through contingency and randomness.

2- Adorno's Conception of Society qua Totality in Capitalism

In the heated philosophical-political dispute in the sixties in West Germany between the "dialectical" theories of society, represented by Theodor Adorno and his then assistant Jürgen Habermas, and the empiricist or the so-called "positivist" theories of society, represented by Karl Popper and Hans Albert, perhaps the most decisive point of divergence is the former's emphasis on the concept of "totality". Yet, as Albert – not quite unjustifiably – complains, although "the dialectical concept of totality...constantly recurs in theoreticians who follow in Hegel's footsteps", and although these thinkers "look upon this concept as being in some way fundamental", they fail to provide a "precise formulation of this concept" (*PD* 167). Popper is even more trenchant than

Albert, as he claims that Adorno's concept of totality is "completely trivial", since it simply signifies that societal totality consists of social relationships, which are all interconnected with each other, and this triviality has been presented by "countless philosophers and sociologists" (PD 297).

We should take Popper's *triviality charge* quite seriously. In fact, there is always a danger in any holistic thought, Hegelian one included, to become devoid of content. In response to the question *why* an individual fact is such and such, it is sometimes merely asserted that the individual fact cannot be explained on its own, and has to be explained through whole, which makes the individual fact what it is. Yet, when one presses, what is exactly this whole that is the ultimate *explanans* of all *explananda*, the answer is not clear. The whole, in this way, becomes a means for non-explanation, perhaps a rhetoric device to persuade, but not to determinately explain. In this section, my aim is to carve out in detail what Adorno means by the concept of totality, and show that his conception is far from trivial.

To begin with, it is important to emphasize that Adorno locates himself in the tradition of critical social theory, which allows itself to make use of metaphysical and philosophical concepts to explain the social and political world. True to the spirit of this tradition, Adorno identifies the concept of "totality" with the concept of "society". According to Adorno, human society constitutes a totality in which all facts and phenomena take place. However, it is not the case that any human community throughout history constitutes a totality. Rather, it is only in capitalism in which all individuals become so interrelated that society becomes a totality. The building block of this totality, a principle that permeates the modern social world and connects all

phenomena with each other, is the “exchange principle” [Tauschprinzip]. Adorno, following Marx, believes that capitalism is a social formation in which the commodities are primarily produced not for the sake of being used by the producer, but for the sake of getting exchanged with other commodities. The principle of exchange thus makes human community in capitalism “a radically socialized society” [eine radikal vergesellschaftete Gesellschaft] (*GS* 5:273), a society in which all social phenomena become interrelated to form a totality¹²³. That is, according to Adorno – and this point is not necessarily Marx’s – the principle of exchange in advanced capitalism not only forms the domain of what we ordinarily call market or the realm of economy, but transforms virtually *all* aspects of life: from our very intimate personal relationship in the case of romantic love, to how we spend our leisure time, to the ostensibly more exalted areas of life, including, culture, art, to even the way we do philosophy¹²⁴.

According to Albert, using the concept of totality or society in sociology is useless and even misleading, since totality or society as such is not empirically “testable” or “verifiable” (*PD* 175)¹²⁵. We always encounter particular social phenomena, occurring in particular social context. Therefore, we will be better off if we limit our investigation to the realm of the factual, since it is only through attention to the facts that we can test

¹²³ “A world integrated through production, through the exchange relationship, depends in all its moments on the social condition of its production, and in that sense actually realizes the primacy of the whole over its parts.” (*GS* 5:275, *Three Studies*: 27). “The context of the social individual actions must be tied together into a seamless totality, predetermining for the individual, as never was the case in the feudal epoch” (*GS* 6:313)

¹²⁴ “They are not merely character-masks [the owner of commodities], agents of [economic] value, in some presumed special sphere of the economy. Even where they think they have escaped the primacy of the economy, all the way down to their psychology, the *maison tolérée* [universal home] of what is unknowably individual, they react under the compulsion of the generality [obtained through exchange principle]” (*GS* 6:206).

¹²⁵ See also Adorno’s discussion of this point in the Introduction (*PD* 13ff).

our theory and find out whether the theory works or not. Adorno's answer to this criticism shows his deeply Hegelian commitments, and how profoundly he diverges from Albert. According to Adorno, "while society cannot be abstracted from individual facts, nor be grasped as an individual fact itself, there is nonetheless *no* social fact which is not determined by society as a whole" (GS 8:10). Thus Adorno is committed to two seemingly antithetical claims: one, societal totality is not at any rate something distinct from individual social phenomena; two, nevertheless, no individual social phenomenon can exist on its own nor can be made intelligible without considering its relation to the totality. Adorno makes this point through an explicitly dialectical formulation:

Societal totality does not lead a life of its own over and above that which it unites and of which it, in its turn, is composed. It produces and reproduces itself through its individual moments.... This totality can no more be detached from life, from co-operation and the antagonism of its elements than an element can be understood merely as its function without insight into the whole which has its source in the motion of the individual himself. (PD 107)

That the totality is not separable from the individual moments shows how Adorno is reacting towards certain neo-Platonic readings of Hegel. Adorno emphasizes that for Hegel also there is no "pre-formed" totality, but totality is only constituted through its constituting moments, and through their inter-relation and motion. In a good Hegelian fashion, Adorno maintains that society qua totality is not a *thing*, whether material or immaterial, and "it cannot be ostensively [deiktisch] shown" (GS 8:11), but it is essentially a "process". This means that through the inter-relation of individuals, a dynamic totality gets formed, which nevertheless, is effective in said individuals from the beginning, so to speak. This point, of course, can never be empirically tested. Adorno writes,

No experiment could convincingly demonstrate the dependence of each social phenomenon on the totality, for the whole which pre-forms the tangible phenomena can never itself be reduced to particular experimental arrangements. Nevertheless, the dependence of that which can be socially observed upon the total structure is, in reality, more valid than any findings which can be irrefutably verified in the particular, and this dependence is anything but a mere figment of the imagination. (*GS* 8:556, *PD* 113)

It is for these reasons that Adorno thinks that the proper method for doing sociology is not empiricist, but should be borrowed from Hegel's speculative logic. Indeed, in contrast to the contemporary Critical Theory, Adorno believes that Hegel's penetrating vision about the modern social world is *only* achieved *by virtue of* his speculative logic, and "loses its substance" as soon as that logic is laid aside (*GS* 5:252, *Three Studies*: 3). According to Adorno, it is exactly the speculative logic that grasps the primacy of totality, and as such it is "indispensable...for social knowledge." (*PD* 113).

This Hegelian heritage in Adorno's conception of society qua totality is evident in two other points that I would like to briefly address. Firstly, for Adorno, the relation between the individual and society is not a relation of species and genus, conventionally understood. It is not the case that if we begin with individuals, and classify them according to their similarities and dissimilarities we could climb up the ladder of classification, and eventually reach a highest category – society – under which all other lower classificatory categories could be subsumed (*GS* 8:9). Adorno's is a distinctly Hegelian thesis, as Hegel's totality is not achieved through this process of inductive classification. Totality for Hegel is not a kind of Porphyrian tree, which orders categories; rather, Hegel's method is characteristically "developmental", i.e. how the categories, through their very internal insufficiencies must necessarily "develop" into more complex

categories, until reaching the maximally complex category, which is totality. Secondly, for Adorno, totality is not a mere organizing principle, which brings the parts into a harmonious relationship with each other. Referring to Hegel's conception of totality, Adorno writes, "as a critic of romanticism, Hegel knows that the whole realizes itself ... only through discontinuity, alienation, and reflection" (*GS* 5:253, *Three Studies*: 4). This means that Hegel's totality, according to Adorno, does not have any "pantheistic color," and is emphatically not an "unruptured unity" [undurchbrochene Einheit] (*NS-V* 2:37); rather, Hegel's totality is solely constructed through "antagonistic relations" of parts that constitute them¹²⁶.

There is one aspect to Adorno's conception of totality that needs specific attention. According to Adorno, totality is *coercive* upon the individuals, who nonetheless constitute it (Cf. O'Connor 2013: 34ff). Indeed, Adorno talks about society's "omnipotence" in capitalism, and "the powerlessness of the individuals, confronted to the totality" (*PD* 78). This point is a guidepost in my interpretation of Hegel's logic of essence in this chapter and of Marx's analysis of capitalism in the next chapter. We have learned that the constituting principle of totality for Adorno (following Marx) is the exchange of commodities. The best evidence that the totality is coercive upon individuals is that whoever does not adjust himself to this logic is doomed to be destroyed. "The form of total inter-relation" in capitalism, Adorno writes, "requires everyone to submit

¹²⁶ Adorno quotes the following passage from the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to support his interpretation: "The life of God and divine cognition might thus be expressed as a game love plays with itself. If this Idea, it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labor of the negative, then it lowers itself into edification, even into triteness. *In itself* that life is indeed an unalloyed sameness and unity with itself, since in such a life there is neither anything serious in this otherness and alienation, nor in overcoming this alienation. However, this *in-itself* is abstract universality, in which its nature, which is *to be for itself*, and the self-movement of the form are both left out of view." (*PhG* §19) (Adorno, *NS-V* 2:66)

himself [sich unterwerfen müssen] to the law of exchange, if he does not wish to be perished [wenn sie nicht zugrunde gehen wollen], irrespective of profit is his subjective motivation or not" (*GS* 8:14). According to Adorno, this is exactly the point that the positivist strands in sociology, through their empirical methodology and their underlying nominalist metaphysics, are not able to grasp: namely, what is ultimately effective in capitalism is "the blindly dominating totality" (*PD* 14), not the individuals. Indeed, Adorno, following the Hegelian tradition of secularization of philosophical-theological concepts designates society as "ens realissimum", i.e. the most real being (*GS* 6:309).

Adorno associates the power of totality over individuals with the notion of "spell" [der Bann], which has replaced Greek fate in capitalism, from which no one can escape. The individuals are spellbound, as it were, because they follow the logic of the totality compulsively, even without being aware of it. "What they can do nothing about, and which negates them," Adorno emphasizes, "is what they themselves become". The individuals might think that they are autonomous, but in truth, "they behave on their own in accordance with what is inescapable" (*GS* 6: 337-8). The totality constitutes their very individuality, and because of its constitutive character, is not necessarily experienced by them as something alien. If somebody wants to oppose the power of the spell, he will be reduced to a "mutilated" and "insignificant" thing, "lacking any substance". In Adorno's jargon, "all the non-identical phenomena that are expelled as a result of the domination of the identity principle are nevertheless mediated by the power of that principle" (*HF*: 96).

According to Adorno, totality is coercive upon *all* individuals, without exception, not merely workers, or the unemployed. "It is, however, not just the population at large, which is subjected to this domination", Adorno writes, "but also those in control and their

entourage”; since, in the capitalist social formation, “the powerful” are also “the appendages of their own machinery of production” (Late Capitalism: 217). Adorno observes, “even captains of industry spend their time working through mountains of documents and shifting them from one side of their desk to the other, instead of ignoring office hours, and reflecting on freedom”, simply because “were they to pursue the latter course, their business would collapse in chaos” (HF: 6). Indeed, according to Adorno, totality qua society is “kollektiver Zwangsmechanismus” (GS 8:13). Even the individual capitalist’s domination over his workers is an “epiphenomenon” of power of totality over them (HF: 30). The particular employer can exert domination over the particular employee, not because he is more powerful in isolation, but because his power is an effect of the power of totality. For this reason, the conflict between the particular employer and employee is not comprehensible on its own, Adorno asserts, but it is only comprehensible through the totality of society, which has the “ultimate reality” (GS 8:10).

Although totality has power over all individuals and all individual social facts; that does not mean that its effect is undifferentiated. True that the exchange principle is the underlying principle for the construction of totality; but that does not mean that it manifests itself in all areas of life in the same way and to the same extent. This is one point, Adorno thinks, that distinguishes the modern form of domination from the pre-modern forms. “In the democratically governed countries of industrial societies”, Adorno writes, “totality is a category of *mediation*, not one of *immediate* domination and subjugation” (PD 107, my emphasis). “In industrial market societies”, Adorno believes, “by no means everything pertaining to society can simply be deduced from its principles”. Rather “such societies contain within themselves countless non-capitalist enclaves” (ibid).

The persistence of the institution of family, for example, in capitalism is not directly deducible from the principle of exchange; nevertheless, its nature in capitalism is formed, permeated and infected by that principle (the so-called ‘nuclear family’), as many feminists have already pointed out. Far from being an institution separable from the totality, family is a quasi-enclave, which has its own function within capitalism and helps the perpetuation of capitalism. “Even those enclaves, survivals from previous societies”, Adorno believes, “become what they are only in relation to the dominant totality from which they deviate.” (ibid). Precisely because the mode of domination in the modern world is not direct and immediate, the totality of the modern society can tolerate relative independence of some of its moments, though this independence remains only relative.

Totality, for Adorno, exhibits a rich and differentiated array of causality over the individuals. “Society keeps itself and its members alive”, Adorno writes, “but simultaneously threatens them with ruin” (*PD* 108). The capitalist totality, that is, is *both* the cause of life *and* the cause of death of the individuals, and this at the same time, and through the very same mechanism (*HF* 49). The very class antagonism that oppresses the workers and threatens the social fabric to disintegrate, at the very same time and through the very same mechanism, reproduces the life of the individuals¹²⁷.

According to Adorno, it is not only the case that the totality has power over individuals, but also that the particular and determinate (economic) institutions are powerful over individuals. This might seem to be two distinct claims, but in fact they are closely inter-related. That is, the particular institutions of capitalist mode of production

¹²⁷ “Society preserves itself, not in spite of its antagonism but through it; the profit motive, and thereby the class relationship, are objectively the motor of the process of production on which everyone’s life depends and whose primacy has its vanishing-point in the death of all.” (*GS* 6:314)

hang together and cohere with each other to form a totality, such that each individual institution makes its priority over individuals through recourse to the totality that is itself made solely through the relation of the said particular institutions. This means that the mark of the coercion of totality over individuals is present in the coercion of each particular institution over individuals. This would lead us to understand Adorno's general understanding of the relation of individuals to the institutions of the modern capitalist society. For Adorno, "society meets individuals primarily as that which is not-identical, as coercion [Zwang]". He emphasizes, "the specifically social consists precisely in the predominance of institutions over men [Übergewicht von Verhältnissen über die Menschen] (GS 8:9). For Adorno, individuals in capitalism are reduced to "mere executive organs" [bloße Ausführungsorgane] (GS 6:336) of the institutions, their mere "disempowered products" [entmächtigte Produkte] (GS 8:9)¹²⁸.

3- What Hegel's Totality is not

In this section, I will show (1) that Hegel's totality is not sum-total of all realities, and (2) that Hegel's totality shall not be understood in terms of a part/whole holism.

¹²⁸ In closing, I should make a brief note on Adorno's famous dictum in *Minima Moralia* – "the whole is the untrue" [Das Ganze ist das Unwahre] (GS 4:55). According to Adorno, this dictum should not be considered as inconsistent with Hegel's "the true is the whole" [Das Wahre ist das Ganze] (PhG §20). According to Adorno, as I take him, the second claim has to be understood in a *descriptive* or *structural* way. The truth is that the totality in capitalism is the most real being, and that the function of individuals is only to contribute to its existence. In contrast, the first claim has to be understood in an *evaluative* way. That individuals are only the "executive organs" of the totality makes the totality in capitalism, in a *moral* sense, "untrue". The distinction between description and evaluation that I ascribe to Adorno corresponds to his ultimately (post-Hegelian) Kantianism. In Hegel's logic of essence, and Marx's critique of capitalism, there is no place for values. (See the Conclusion of the dissertation.)

3-1- Totality is not Sum-Total of All Realities.

One natural way of conceiving “totality” is to understand it in terms of “allness”, i.e. all realities cumulated together. Karl Popper in the *Poverty of Historicism* ascribes this conception of whole to the Hegelian-Marxist tradition, and criticizes it (Popper 2012 (1957):70ff)¹²⁹. According to Popper, the concept of the whole in this tradition is used to denote “the totality of all the properties or aspects of a thing, and especially of all the relations holding between its constituent parts” (ibid:70), and continues,

If we wish to study a thing, we are bound to select certain aspects of it. It is not possible for us to observe or to describe a whole piece of the world, or a whole piece of nature; in fact, not even the smallest whole piece may be so described, since all description is necessarily selective. It may even be said that wholes in [this] sense...can never be the object of any activity, scientific or otherwise. If we take an organism and transport it to another place, then we deal with it as a physical body, neglecting many of its other aspects. If we kill it, then we have destroyed certain of its properties, but never all of them. In fact, we cannot possibly destroy the totality of its properties and of all the interrelations of its parts, even if we smash it or burn it. (ibid: 71)

According to Popper, studying totality in this sense is a “logical impossibility”, since any study must “abstract” from a vast array of details, and only take into account those aspects that are relevant to the study. Popper’s point about the impossibility of conceiving totality in terms of allness is well granted. But Hegel (or Marx or Adorno, for that matter) never thought of whole in this way. For Hegel, it is clear that the process of adding things or properties or relations one by one such that we eventually reach totality is an instance

¹²⁹ In this part of the book “the Criticism of Holism”, Popper is actually criticizing Karl Mannheim’s *Man and Society*, but from the context it is completely clear that he means that his criticism applies not only to Mannheim (who was neither a Hegelian nor a Marxist), but also to Hegel and Marx and their followers.

of “bad infinity” and leaves the totality simply “indeterminate”. Hegel indeed emphasizes that totality is not *omnitude realitatis*; it is not the “sum total of all realities” [Inbegriff aller Realitäten]; since, this “lacks all determinate character, and is inherently lifeless and empty [in sich tote, leere, Bestimmungslosigkeit] (*WdL* II:14, *SL* 390). This means that for Hegel, contrary to what Popper would ascribe to him, a true knowledge of a society does not involve that we know *everything* about that society, from its geography, to the sexual relationship between people, to food preferences, to details of their way of talking and behaving, etc, and Hegel himself in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* when he talks about different societies throughout history never proceeds this way. (Or to be a good Hegelian historian, one does not need to talk about *all* the events in their detail, but one has to show the “idea” within the historical facts, leaving those unrelated issues aside.)¹³⁰ In his *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel makes it absolutely clear that understanding *everything* is not the aim of philosophy:

Philosophy has to start from the Concept, and even if it does not assert much, we must be content with this. The Philosophy of Nature is in error when it wants to account for every phenomenon. [Es ist eine Verirrung der Naturphilosophie, daß sie allen Erscheinungen will Face machen.] This is what happens in the finite sciences, which try to trace everything back to general conceptions, the hypotheses. In these sciences, the sole verification of the hypothesis lies in the empirical element and consequently everything must be explained. But what is known through the Notion is clear by itself and stands firm; and philosophy need

¹³⁰ In his early work, “Wie der gemeine Menschenverstand die Philosophie nehme – dargestellt an den Werken des Herrn Krug” (1802), Hegel already makes this point. A certain Wilhelm Traugott Krug demands idealist philosophy to deduce “every dog and cat, and even Mr. Krug’s writing pen”. Hegel points that such demand is simply ludicrous, and asserts: “*man hätte sich nicht sollen das Ansehen geben, als ob man das ganze System der Vorstellungen deduzieren wolle.*” (*WW* 2:194)

not feel any embarrassment about this, even if all phenomena are not yet explained. (*EnzN* §270Z)

Indeed, Hegel's method of theorizing the totality is much more selective than what Popper might think as to be appropriate for doing science. In the quoted passage, Hegel even asserts that understanding totality in terms of allness counts more as a desideratum of empirical sciences than of speculative philosophy; because the foundation of science according to empirical methodology is the empirical fact, and unless all relevant empirical facts are understood, we cannot be sure that the corresponding theory is true. In contrast, for speculative philosophy, which deals with the essential or conceptual structure, much of the empirical details can be simply neglected. To give an example from Hegel, in order to understand what species is, it is "indifferent" whether there are "sixty-seven species of parrots" or "a dozen more" and such trivialities do not belong to the sphere of philosophy (*WdL* II:524, *SL* 804).

3-2- Hegel's Holism is not a Part/Whole Holism.

Another natural way of understanding totality is to conceive it as consisting of parts, such as a table that consists of four legs and a surface. This has also permeated our way of thinking about social wholes. We might think that a state consists of three parts, executive, legislative, and judicative, or a society as consisting of the individuals that are in it. Hegel is utterly critical of this view, and expresses this criticism in a section entitled "the relation of the whole and the parts" [*Das Verhältniss des Ganzen und der Teile*] in the logic of essence (*WdL* II:166ff, *SL* 513ff, *EnzL*. §135 & §136). Hegel does not deny that there are some wholes that can be conceived as simply consisting of parts – mostly those

wholes that have a “mechanical” nature – but he believes that these wholes are themselves “untrue”. The true whole – which has its model in organic life, and the realm of the mental and the social – cannot be captured through the relation of parts and whole. Yet this is exactly the way, Hegel believes, that the Understanding, with its analytic way of thinking, regards the whole. So, for example, in psychology it is usually assumed that the mind or the Spirit has different faculties or powers – such as imagination, sensation, memory, understanding, etc – and the mind is simply the coming-together of these parts (*EnzL.* §135Z). The problem with this analytic way of thinking is that it does not grasp the parts in their internal unity, that it does not conceive that the parts are parts only in relation to the whole that constitute them as parts. The language that Hegel uses to describe the relation of whole and parts is highly reminiscent of the logic of being:

The *relationship of the whole and the parts* is the immediate relationship; hence, the thoughtless relationship [gedankenlose Verhältnis] and the turning over [Umschlagen] of the identity-with-itself into diversity [Verschiedenheit]. There is a passing-over from the whole to the parts and from the parts to the whole, and in the one [the whole or the parts] the opposition to the other is forgotten since each is taking as a self-standing existence, the one time the whole, the other time the parts. Or since the parts are supposed to subsist *in* the whole and the whole to consist *of* the parts, one time the one, the other time the other is the *subsisting* and the other is each time the *unessential*. The *mechanical* relationship, in its superficial form, consists generally in the fact that the parts are taken as self-subsisting against each other and against the whole. (*EnzL.* §136)

Here Hegel claims that (1) in the relation of whole and parts, each of the relata is considered *one time* as self-subsisting and independent from the other, and (2) *another time*, as related to the other, but (3) these two different aspects of the relation never get explicated, hence (4) the relation remains merely an “external relation” such that the

relata only “turn over to each other” and can be only pasted together through a mere addition, a mere “too” [auch] (Cf. *WdL* II:167, *SL* 514).

Hegel also gives some detailed arguments why the relation of parts and whole is insufficient to explain the structure of whole properly understood; especially two arguments stand out that need to be explained briefly:

3-2-1-The part/whole relationship is tautological.

- (1) “Although the whole is equal to the parts, it is not equal to *them* as parts”. Rather,
- (2) The whole is equal to the parts as their being “*together*” [zusammen]. But
- (3) “This their ‘together’ [Zusammen] is nothing else but their unity, the whole as such”. Therefore,
- (4) “*The whole as whole* is equal not to the parts, but to *the whole*”

And this is obviously a tautology. And a similar argument this time beginning with the parts:

- (1) Although the parts are equal to the whole, “they are not equal to it as [their] unity”.
- (2) Rather, The parts are “equal to the *whole* as a manifold; that is to say, they are equal to it as a *divided whole*” [geteiltem Ganzen].
- (3) But the divided whole is simply the parts.
- (4) Therefore, “the *parts as parts* are equal, not to the *whole as such*, but in it to *themselves*, the *parts*.”

And this is obviously a tautology. (*WdL* II: 169, *SL* 56)

3-2-2- The part/whole relationship leads to antinomy.

- (1) The whole is a composite [Zusammengesetztes], consisting of parts.
- (2) “The part insofar as it is a part, it is not a whole; it is not a composite, hence it is a *simple* [Einfaches] ”.

- (3) But the part is only a part only through the relation of parts and whole. This means that,
- (4) The part is not a part by and through itself.
- (5) Everything is either a part or a whole.
- (6) From (4) and (5): The part is a whole.
- (7) “But as a whole, it [the part] is again composite; it consists of parts”
- (8) And “so on to infinity” (*WdL* II:171, *SL* 517-8)

Hegel’s point is basically that in the relation of whole and parts, each of the whole and part only relates to itself, and not to the other. Rather, there is a “perennial alternation” of the relata, such that “the one moment in freeing itself from the other, immediately introduces the other” (*WdL* II:172, *SL*: 518). And this according to Hegel is an antinomy: Without the whole there could not be parts – the whole is thus self-subsistent. But at the same time, without the parts, there could not be any whole – the whole is thus *not* self-subsistent.¹³¹ From a Hegelian point of view, even such propositions in Gestalt psychology as “the whole is more than sum of its parts” is totally indeterminate, and already points towards a more determinate conception of totality; since if that which is more than the summation of parts is itself a part, the proposition contradicts itself, and if it is the whole itself, the proposition is simply tautological.

To conclude, the correct way of understanding the relation of individual and whole is not to conceive individuals as “parts” of the whole, rather as being “moments” of the whole. The point, of course, is not merely verbal. Being a “moment” means that the moment is already constituted by the whole, and cannot be conceived at all as self-subsistent apart from the whole. The judiciary is not self-standing apart from the totality

¹³¹ “The antinomy of this inference when closely examined is really this: because the whole is not the self-subsistent, therefore the part is self-subsistent; but because the part is self-subsistent only *without the whole*, it is self-subsistent *not* as part, but rather as whole” (*WdL* II:172, *SL* 518). Hegel’s argument here clearly echoes Kant’s second antinomy (*KdrV* A434, B462ff), which deals with the relation of parts and whole.

of state, but it is formed through the state. The individuals are not separable from society, but they become what they are, only through society. The relation of part/whole can best be understood in terms of spatial representation, such as a country on a map of the world, which is a part of the world. But the relation of member and whole does not have such spatial connotations, and cannot be understood through pictorial thinking. The whole is like an invisible ground that constitutes individuals as individuals.¹³² We get clear about the nature of this invisible ground by going into details of the logic of essence¹³³.

4- Totality as Actuality

4-1- The Necessity of Totality

In the previous chapters, I have argued that in the logic of essence Hegel offers an ontology that is absolutely relational. The very idea of absolute relationality commits Hegel to develop a concept of totality; since the fact that all individuals are solely constituted through relation with each other implies that there is a closed system of relationality, which unites all individuals with each other. Hegel calls such a system of relationality a “world”, namely, “a *world* of reciprocal dependency” [*eine Welt*

¹³² Cf. Marcuse’s account: “Being always occurs in a totality. It is an occurrence in a world, not, however, in the sense that being moves therein as in space, as if it had its “place” there. Rather, this totality holds and grounds being such that any entity can constitute itself as unity only in the totality.” (1987:86)

¹³³ In his *The Metaphysics of the Social World* (1985), David Ruben argues that individuals are not “parts” of social wholes, but their “members”(Chapter 2). According to Ruben, the relation of “being a part of” is transitive, while the relation of “being a member of” is intransitive, and this means that the two sorts of relation have to be different from each other: “If a is an s-part of b, and if b is an s-part of c, then it follows that a is an s-part of c. The membership relation is intransitive, because I might be a member of a trades union, and the trades union might be a member of the Trades Union Congress, but it might be that no individual can be a member of TUC” (69).

gegenseitiger Abhängigkeit] (*EnzL.* §123), which he then explicitly identifies with a “totality” [*Totalität*] (*EnzL.* §132). Importantly, in accordance with the ontology of absolute relationality, Hegel conceives of the totality *not* in terms of a “thing” that underlies relations, but itself as a “relation”. More precisely, as we will see later in the category of actuality, totality is indeed a “*self*-relation”. (Hegel emphasizes that “this infinite mediation is at once a unity of relation-to-itself” (*EnzL.* §132))¹³⁴.

From an architectonic point of view, Hegel in the first part of the logic of essence (“essence as reflection in itself”) argues for a conception of reality that is solely constituted through relation. He shows that the most fundamental form of relation is the asymmetrical relation of “opposition” that obtains between what he calls the “positive” and the “negative”. While the positive and the negative are interrelated, their definition is distinct from each other. Whereas the positive has a privileged status, which subordinately relates to the negative to secure its position, the negative is fundamentally de-centered, and gets defined through its relation to the positive. (See Chapter Two for a detailed discussion.) Having developed the ontology of the absolute relationality through the relation of opposition in the first part of the logic of essence, Hegel sets his aim in the second part – “appearance” [*Erscheinung*] – and the third part – “actuality” [*Wirklichkeit*] – to dialectically develop the concept of totality. Importantly, within the framework of essence, the relation of opposition never gets annulled, and the development of concept of totality is at the same time the development of the relation of opposition. In this section, I first discuss Hegel’s conception of totality qua essence and

¹³⁴ Cf. Marcuse’s account: “The process of essence has already been defined as a relation taking place within each individual entity. Now, as an ontological characteristic, relation leads beyond individual beings and is ascribed to the totality as a maintaining and grounding occurrence; for totality is only a ‘relation-to-self’” (1987:86)

qua appearance (4-2) and then discuss totality qua actuality (4-3). This section lays the groundwork for Hegel to develop his ultimate conception of totality in essence in the category of “substance”, which I discuss in the next section.

Before delving into details of Hegel’s logic, I would like to briefly mention the necessity of totality for securing the relation of power obtained through the relation of opposition. It is obvious that the relation of power between two individuals, say between a capitalist and a worker is by and through itself unsustainable. If the asymmetrical interdependence of a capitalist and a worker was all there is to their relation, it is plausible that the worker could easily change his situation (say, through exiting the said relation). The reason that he cannot do so is that such a relation of opposition is grounded in an extensive set of economic, social, legal and political institutions that stabilize it. From a Hegelian point of view, the interrelation of such institutions constitutes a totality, a “system of ethical world” [System der sittlichen Welt] (*GPR* §270) that in its very totality exerts power over all individuals. This exactly corresponds to Hegel’s conception of “substance” in the logic, which he identifies with “absolute power”, as we will see in detail later.¹³⁵

4-2- The Logical Genesis of Actuality: Essence and Appearance

The dialectic of appearance in the second part of the logic of essence gets articulated in different forms: in terms of the relation of “essence” and “appearance” or “existence”

¹³⁵ Even if we accept that the foundation of the modern world is the symmetrical relation of intersubjectivity, as the philosophers of recognition do, one still needs to give an account of the “totality” which constitutes such relations. Thus, the logical primacy will always be on “substance”, although the philosophers of recognition might want to repress it in their theories.

[Existenz], “thing and its properties” [Das Ding und seine Eigenschaften], “the phenomenal world and the in-itself world” [Die erscheinende und die an sich seiende Welt], “force and its expression” [die Kraft und ihre Äußerung], and finally “the inner and the outer” [das Innere und das Äußere]¹³⁶. We should note that all of these relations for Hegel are instances of the relation of opposition. In each case, (1) the two relata are constitutively interdependent (there cannot be any essence without appearance, and vice versa), such that the negation of each immediately results in the other; (2) yet at the same time the relation is asymmetrical (it is essence that appears, not vice versa. It is force that gets externalized, not vice versa). Despite the similarity, however, the above relations are distinct from the relation of opposition in the first part of essence. Whereas in the relation of opposition, the two relata are individuals (the positive and the negative), in the dialectic of appearance the two relata are both totalities. That is, each of the relata mentioned above (essence and appearance, inner and outer, thing and the properties) has to be understood in terms of a totality relating to the other relatum as another totality. Concerning the relation of “essence” and “appearance”, Hegel writes that the two relata are “*two worlds, two totalities* of the content, one of which is determined as *reflected into itself*, the other as *reflected into an other*” (WdL II:186, SL 529). He explicates this relation in the following way:

Thus the world of appearance and the essential world are each in themselves the totality of self-identical reflection and reflection-into-an-other, or of being-in-and-for-self and appearance. Both are self-subsistent wholes of existence [Existenz]:

¹³⁶ Technically the relation of whole and parts (discussed above) belongs to the list. I have not included it here, as Hegel introduces the relation of whole and parts only to *criticize* it. This is of course a pattern that Hegel frequently uses in all his works. Namely, he takes up an element of the previous stage of dialectic, translates it into to the new stage, and shows its insufficiencies in its new format.

the one is supposed to be only reflected existence, the other immediate existence; but each *continues* itself in its other and is therefore in its own self the identity of these two moments. What is present, therefore, is this totality which repels itself from itself into two totalities, one the *reflected*, the other the *immediate* totality. Both, in the first instance, are self-subsistents, but they are self-subsistent only as totalities, and they are this in so far as each essentially contains within it the moment of the other. (*WdL* II:162, *SL* 510)

The novelty of Hegel's conception of essence is clear. As I have argued in Chapter One, Hegel denies the distinction between the "essential" and "unessential" properties (in his discussion of "the Essential" and "the Unessential" in the beginning of the logic of essence). He argues that if we accept such an Aristotelian distinction between essential and non-essential properties, or a Lockean one between primary and secondary qualities, we end up in an *indeterminate* situation; since we cannot determinately decide which properties are essential, which ones are unessential; which ones are primary, which ones are secondary. That is to say, such conception of the essential *in exclusion of* the inessential inevitably leads to a conceptual block, a conceptual block that indicates that the question – what is essential, what is not essential? – is a wrong question to ask. Rather, Hegel now suggests that essence must be conceived as *a totality, which in its very totality, appears into the totality of appearance*. (Or similarly, the "thing" must be conceived as a totality, which shows itself into the totality of "properties" of the thing; and the same for "force" and "expression"; and the "inner" and the "outer").

This talk of essence and appearance might lead to misunderstanding, and it is important to get Hegel right on this point. According to Hegel, it is *not* the case that essence is a hidden kernel, as if located *behind* the appearance, but it is that which

appears *in* the appearance, and has therefore no existence without appearance. Consider these two passages:

The essence must *appear*....The essence is thus not *behind* or *beyond* the appearance; instead by virtue of the fact that it is the essence that exists, existence is appearance. (*EnzL* §131)

The outer is thus, *in the first place, the same content* as the inner is. What is internal is also present externally and vice versa. The appearance shows nothing that is not in the essence, and there is nothing in the essence that is not manifested. (*EnzL*. §139)

A similar mistake has also to be avoided. The fact that there is nothing in essence that does not appear does not mean that what there is is only phenomenon, and that essence is *reducible* to its appearance.¹³⁷ That is, Hegel in expounding the dialectic of essence and appearance denies two equally one-sided positions: (a) a kind of “emanistic idealism”¹³⁸ according to which essence is a separate and hidden kernel that gets emanated in the appearance. (b) a kind of pure phenomenalism which denies the existence of any essence or any interiority. Thus, according to Hegel, if we want to understand a phenomenon (say, mass unemployment in capitalism) in an adequate way, we have to “bifurcate” it and understand it one time, in terms of an *appearance* of an essence (that a significant number of people do not have job, with all material, psychological and social ailments that come with it), and another time, in terms of an appearance of an *essence* (the inner

¹³⁷ In a footnote in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel sympathetically quotes Goethe: “For sixty years I hear repeated / What I curse, be it in secret / Nature has no kernel no shell / Here comes everything all at once.” (*EnzL*. §140)

¹³⁸ The term “emanistic idealism” is from Emil Lask who wrongly attributes it to Hegel. See Lask (2002 (1902): 44ff)

logic of capital which produces an “industrial reserve army”, or deregulation of labor markets by the state, etc.)

Hegel uses the term “translation” [Übersetzen] to describe the relation of essence to appearance. (Essence *translates itself* into appearance.¹³⁹) The talk of “translation”, as Vittorio Hösle has suggested in another context implies (1) that the totality of essence is in another language as the totality of appearance, meaning that the two totalities, though related, are ultimately distinct from each other; (2) that there should be an underlying unity between the two totalities, otherwise the act of translation from one language to the other one cannot transpire; (3) that there remains always a mismatch between the two languages; that is, there is always the possibility of mistakes or inadequate rendering in translation¹⁴⁰.

These are all important points that capture the specificity of the dialectic of appearance and also point us towards the conception of “actuality”. The dialectic of appearance, as it stands, remains under-determinate, since we do not yet have the conceptual resources to adequately grasp the unity between the two interdependent

¹³⁹ Textually, he uses the term to describe the relation between “force” and “expression”, yet the point holds for all instances of the dialectic of essence and appearance: “The movement of force is not so much a passing-over [übergehen] as a movement in which it translates itself [sich selbst übersetzt] and in this alteration posited by itself remains what it is.” (*WdL* II:173, *SL* 519); and: “The reflected unity [of force and expression] is essentially a becoming-other as translation of itself [i.e. of force] into externality” (*WdL* II: 179, *SL* 524)

¹⁴⁰ Hösle talks about translation in another context, namely, the relation between logic and Realphilosophie: “Der Terminus...Übersetzung deutet...doch dreilei an: erstens daß zu Vorstellung und Begriff gleichsam zwei verschiedene *Sprache* gehören; zweitens daß daher eine *Vermittlung* zwischen ihnen erforderlich ist; drittens daß *Übersetzungsfehler* passieren kann. Die Vermittlung zwischen Vorstellung und Begriff, wie sie die Realphilosophie leisten muß, geht in zwei Richtungen, einerseits muß der Philosoph zunächst einmal aus der Sphäre der Vorstellung in diejenige des Begriffs vordringen, andererseits, muß er aber dann, in der Realphilosophie, seine Begriffe wieder in Vorstellung übersetzen, was ein zweiter Schritt ist, der nicht notwendig mit der klaren Erfassung begrifflicher Strukturen schon geleistet ist.” (1987: 84)

totalities that ultimately remain distinct from each other. “The [essential] relation”, Hegel writes, “is still incomplete union of reflection-into-otherness and reflection-into-itself; the complete interpenetration [Durchdringung] of both is *actuality*” (*WdL* II 125, *SL* 480).¹⁴¹ Moreover, the fact of constitutive discrepancy and mismatch of the totality of appearance with the totality of essence cannot be conceptualized within the framework of this relation. For this, we need the modal categories – especially necessity and contingency – that I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five.

4-3- Totality as Actuality

The separation of the *in itself* and the *for itself*, of substance and subject, is abstract mysticism. (Marx, *MEW* 1:265, *MECW* 3:62)

“Actuality” is the third and the final part of the logic of essence, and as such it is the fundamental category of the objective logic. Up to now, I have shown that, for Hegel, the dyadic relation between the positive and the negative has to occur in a totality, and that in the first step, this totality is bifurcated into two totalities of essence and appearance. It is now one single step to actuality, since,

The actual is the *positedness* of that unity [of the mediatedness of essence and immediacy of appearance], the relationship that has become identical with itself. It is thus exempted from the *passing over* and its *externality* is its energy; in that

¹⁴¹ Also the following passage: “This is the *concept* of the [essential] relation. But at first the identity it contains is not yet complete; the totality which each related side is within itself is at first an inner; the side of the relation is in the first instance posited in *one* of the determinations of the negative unity; the self-subsistence belonging to each of the two sides is that which constitutes the form of the relation. Its identity is therefore only a *relation*, its self-subsistence falling outside it, namely in the sides; the reflected unity of this identity and the self-subsistent Existences, namely, *substance*, is not yet before us.” (*WdL* II:165, *SL* 513)

externality, it is reflected in itself; its existence is only the *manifestation of itself*, not of an other. (*EnzL.* §142)

Whereas in the dialectic of essence and appearance, essence appears in appearance (which is distinct from essence), actuality is manifestation of *itself*. That is, the dichotomy or *chorismos* of *two* totalities has become internalized in *one* totality that now shows itself. Thus, actuality for Hegel is a relation in which the determining and the determined are one and the same, and for this precise reason, it is a “self-relation”. Actuality, therefore, is the first appearance of the concept of *self*, though not in its fully developed *selfhood* or subjectivity of the Concept.¹⁴² The actual, Hegel writes, “manifests itself; that is, in its externality it is *itself* and is *itself* in that alone, namely only as a self-distinguishing and self-determining movement” (*WdL* II:201, *SL* 542, my emphases).

Recall that for Adorno society qua totality “cannot be ostensively shown”, although it shows itself in all social phenomena. Adorno’s undeveloped insight can find its adequate philosophical articulation here in Hegel’s logic. Actuality qua *one* totality does not have any other. It is not, therefore, relative. (It is for this reason that Hegel talks about “the absolute” in the chapter of actuality; since the absolute by definition is that which does not have any other). Showing something or referring to something necessarily presupposes differentiation from other things, and because there is no other for actuality, actuality cannot be shown from a standpoint outside it. Rather, actuality shows itself; *it is immediately and directly manifestation*¹⁴³. According to Hegel, the

¹⁴² Cf. Thomas Sören Hoffmann’s account: (1) “Die Wirklichkeit ist das zusammengegangene Verhältnis von Bestimmendem und Bestimmtwerdendem, oder die Wirklichkeit ist nunmehr ein *Selbstverhältnis*.” (2012:350), (2) “Die Wirklichkeit ist [...] der erste wenn auch im negative Ansich verharrende Begriff des *Selbsts*, den die Hegelsche Logik enthält. (1991:280)

¹⁴³ Cf. Hoffman’s account: “Das Absolute ist, ganz banal genommen, das jenseits aller Relationen stehende, das, auf das deshalb nicht „referiert“ werden kann. Man kann auf das Absolute oder auf

“demonstration” of the absolute or actuality, “can be neither a determining nor an external reflection from which determinations of the absolute would result; on the contrary, it is the *exposition*, and in fact the absolute’s *own* exposition, and only a *displaying of what it is*.” (WdL II:187, SL 531) [sondern es ist die *Auslegung*, und zwar die *eigene* Auslegung des Absoluten und nur ein *Zeigen dessen, was es ist*.]¹⁴⁴

According to Adorno, Hegel’s philosophy is aimed at overcoming what Adorno calls “philosophy of perspective” [Standpunktphilosophie] (GS 5:252). This is a term that Adorno coins to designate any kind of philosophy, which looks at the objects from an *external* point of view, instead of letting the objects speak for themselves. Within the framework of the logic, actuality is precisely the place that such external perspective is fully overcome. The relation of essence and appearance or the inner and outer in an object still presupposes an external standpoint to the object, from which such distinction is being made¹⁴⁵. In contrast, actuality emphatically is “self-subsistent”. [Die

die Wirklichkeit nicht eigentlich zeigen, weil das Verhältnis des Zeigens schon ein Unterscheiden enthält. Das Absolute ist kein gezeigtes, sondern ein Sich-Zeigendes...Die Wirklichkeit im strikten Sinne des Wortes ist unmittelbar gerade nicht das, worauf wir zeigen, sondern das, was sich uns zeigt. In dieser Hinsicht ist das Absolute oder das Wirkliche nicht verschlossen, nicht nur *per negationem* ansprechbar, es ist vielmehr unmittelbar *Manifestation*.” (2012:352)

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Hoffmann’s account: “Ist die Wirklichkeit aber so nicht als ein „es gibt“, nicht im Sinne des Verstandeskonstrukts der „Gegebenheit“, sondern als ein ursprüngliches Sich-Geben und Sich-in-anderes-als-in-sich-Geben verstanden, dann ist auch die positive Einheit (das „Geben“) in der Tat schon als Tätigkeit, mithin als negierend oder als negativ verstanden (als „*Sich-Geben*“). (1991:313). Also, Cf. Birgit Sandkaulen’s account: “Über” das Absolute zu sprechen, heißt so, in eine Reflexion einzutreten, die in der Form einer *Reflexion der Reflexion* darauf reflektiert, daß es ein Objekt, über das man sprechen könnte, hier nicht mehr gibt. Eben dies nennt Hegel die “Auslegung des Absoluten”, aus deren Vollzug absehbar die Form einer internen Selbstreflexion des Absoluten werden muß.” (2008: 254)

¹⁴⁵ Cf. with Charles Taylor’s account: “The distinction between inner and outer refers to an observer which is still unintegrated in the system....In contrast, Hegel’s is a system in which the observer is integrated, and in which ultimately... the duality between observer and reality is overcome.” (1977:282)

Wirklichkeit ist das selbständige Verhältniß *WW4:20*]. According to Hegel, actuality is the “light” immanent in the object, which shines through it (*WdL* II:218, *SL* 554). Thus, “to grasp something in its actuality”, in the words of Hoffmann, “is to see it in the light of its self-relation instead of throwing light on it from outside.”¹⁴⁶

In actuality, the relation of inner and outer is superseded, and there is no occult interiority to actuality – if the interiority cannot be externalized, it means that the interiority is not actual. Hegel writes, “the absolute is manifestation not of an inner, nor over against an other, but it is only as the absolute manifestation of itself for itself. As such it is actuality.” (*WdL* II:194-5, *SL* 536). Looking at Hegel’s discussion of the relation of Aristotle and Plato is helpful to understand this issue. According to Hegel,

Aristotle’s polemic against Plato consists then, more precisely, in the fact that the Platonic idea is designated as mere *dunamis* [capacity, potentiality] and that Aristotle makes valid the notion, to the contrary, that the idea, recognized by both of them likewise as what is alone true, is to be considered essentially as *energeia*, i.e. as the inner that is outright [schlechthin] out there and thus as the unity of inner and outer or as the actuality in the emphatic sense of the word discussed here [i.e. in Hegel’s logic]. (*EnzL*. §142Z)

I do not want to enter to the discussion whether Hegel’s construal of the relation of Aristotle and Plato is correct or not. What is important for my discussion is that Hegel understands Plato’s Idea as potentiality that may or may not actualize – a potentiality which is separate and separable from actuality. Hegel on this point, strongly sides with Aristotle who regards actuality as *energeia*, which is not an interior, but *out there*

¹⁴⁶ “Sie [Wirklichkeit] ist zuerst das Licht, in dem alles, was ist und erscheint, offenbar ist. Etwas nach seiner Wirklichkeit auffassen heißt, es in dem Licht seines Selbstverhältnisses zu sehen und es nicht von außen zu beleuchten.” (Hoffmann 2012: 353)

working *in* the phenomenon.¹⁴⁷ For Aristotle, *energeia* is directly related to activity (*ergon*) – *energeia* means being-at-work – and for Hegel, Wirklichkeit is directly related to wirken (being effective, being-at-work): “something manifests its actuality through that which it produces” [seine Wirklichkeit gibt etwas kund durch das, was es hervorbringt] (*WdL* II:208, *SL* 547). Hegel’s actuality is “activity” [Tätigkeit], “self-moving of form” [Sichbewegen der Form], and “activation of the heart of the matter” [Betätigung der Sache] (*EnzL*. §147). Indeed, in contrast to Spinoza’s substance, Hegel thinks actuality is not an “inert identity” [unbewegte Identität] (*WdL* II:197); it is “not that which merely *is* equal to itself, but *is* that which posits itself as equal to itself” [nicht das sich Gleichseiende, sondern das sich selbst Gleichsetzende] (*WdL* II:194, *SL* 535).

Although Hegel does not explicitly conceptualize actuality in terms of power – he does so in the highest form of actuality, in substance – one can say, actuality is indeed already power. For Hegel, actuality is not to be equated to what is simply present. Such mere facticity belongs to the realm of the logic of being, where totality is described as a simple aggregate of individuals. Rather, actuality, being the central category of essence, is defined as what constitutes the essence of totality. Importantly, Hegel relates his conception of actuality to Spinoza’s concept of *causa sui*, as something which has the *power* to cause itself, i.e. brings its essence into existence. “Actuality is the unity of

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Marcuse’s account: “We meet here [i.e. in actuality] the deepest ground of Hegelian ontology....In its highest and most proper sense, *being* is actual *being-there*, being as manifest. To be is to show, to manifest and to reveal oneself. All that is inner, that has not yet emerged and become external, is of an inferior value. All being that possesses an inner is not yet “absolute” being” [*Sein im höchsten, eigentlichsten Sinne ist wirklich da sein, herausgestelltsein: Sein ist Sich-zeigen, Sich-manifestieren, Sich-offenbaren. Alles Innerliche, noch nicht Herausgestellte, noch nicht Äußerlich-gewordene ist eine Minderwertigkeit. Alles Sein, das noch ein Innerliches hat, ist noch nicht das „absolute“ Sein*] (1987:91, German 1975:101)

essence and existence”, Hegel emphasizes (*WdL* II:86, *SL*: 529, also *EnzL* §279)¹⁴⁸.

However, unlike Spinoza’s substance, which is a totality that categorically does not allow any otherness, Hegel’s actuality has its model in organism. An organism is dependent on the external environment, but such dependency does not function as a sheer constraint on the organism. Rather, the organism is able to produce and reproduce itself through the interaction with the environment in which it lives. Like an organism, which is in a dynamic relationship with the external environment, yet has the power to maintain its identity through its changing states, Hegel’s actuality, Marcuse explains,

can transform itself and yet remain the same. It can be destroyed, but *it* is the one destroyed, and this destruction also “belongs” to it in a certain sense. Even when it is completely dependent on it, the actual *brings about* its being-there. The actual is powerful over its being-there in an active way. [Das Wirkliche ist seines Daseins in aktiver Weise mächtig.] It does not allow no matter what to happen to it, but out of itself resists certain kinds of occurrences, while offering itself to others. (Marcuse 1987:93, German 1975:104)

5- Totality as Substance

We have learned that totality for Hegel is “actuality” which is the generative and regenerative process of giving organization to totality. The most determinate form of actuality for Hegel is substance. In the dialectical development from actuality to substance, Hegel includes extensive discussion of modal categories. The aim of this discussion is to show that substance is absolutely necessary, and that individuals are

¹⁴⁸ Although Hegel criticizes Spinoza’s substance as being “inert” and “petrified” – as I will discuss in detail later – he has a great respect for Spinoza’s concept of *causa sui*. According to Hegel, *causa sui* is a “totally speculative concept”, and “hätte Spinoza näher entwickelt, was in der *causa sui* liegt, so wäre seine Substanz nicht das Starre.” (*WW* 20:168)

contingent. I will discuss Hegel's conception of modal categories in detail in Chapter Five. In this section, my aim is to elaborate on Hegel's conception of substance. I begin with Hegel's critique of Spinoza's substance (5-1), and continue to explicate Hegel's own conception of substance (5-2), and conclude with clarifying what it means that for Hegel substance is absolute power (5-3).

5-1- Hegel's Critique of Spinoza's Substance

Hegel's relation to Spinoza in the logic is complex, and explaining it needs another book¹⁴⁹. I need to be brief and selective. Hegel is a friendly critic of Spinoza. He both highly praises Spinoza *and* criticizes him for his shortcomings. The "proper refutation" [eigentliche Widerlegung] of Spinoza occurs in the beginning of the logic of Concept, namely, in the transition from essence to Concept. In the logic of essence, Hegel is very close to Spinoza. As I have explained, Hegel's definition of actuality clearly echoes Spinoza's definition of *causa sui*. Moreover, the highest form of actuality for Hegel is substance, which he discusses with explicit references to Spinoza^{150 151}(*EnzL*. §151Z)¹⁵².

¹⁴⁹ For good discussions about the relation of Hegel's logic to Spinoza's metaphysics, See (1) Klaus Düsing (1983:160ff) (2) Birgit Sandkaulen (2007) (3) Eugene J. Fleischmann, (1964). For a critical discussion of Hegel's appropriation of Spinoza and defending Spinoza against Hegel See (4) Pierre Macherey (2011).

¹⁵⁰ In the *Lectures on the History Philosophy*, Hegel is even more explicit about the importance of Spinoza's substance: "It is therefore worthy of note that thought must begin by placing itself at the standpoint of Spinozism; to be a follower of Spinoza is the essential commencement of all philosophy... When man begins to philosophize, the soul must commence by bathing in this ether of one substance; in which all that man has held as true has disappeared." (*WW* 20:165, *LHP* III:257)

¹⁵¹ "We thus come to the vision of Spinoza, which is really what Hegel builds on here to write the finale of essence" (Taylor 1975:287)

¹⁵² Precisely speaking, in the logic of essence "substance" develops into the "relation of causality", which ultimately culminates into "reciprocal action" [Wechselwirkung]. The latter is

Hegel's invocation of Spinoza, however, should not blind us to the difference of Hegel's conception of substance from Spinoza's. Hegel's logic is not an academic treatise on the history of metaphysics. Rather, Hegel appropriates Spinoza's substance to explicate his own philosophy. (What Hegel does, to use a concept from Bertolt Brecht, is an "Umfunktionierung" of Spinoza's substance; that is, a restructuration so that it would perform a different function). Hegel's different conception of substance also is related to his critique of Spinoza's concept of mode and individuality, and I begin with this criticism.

According to Hegel, Spinoza rightfully and admirably begins with the being of substance, but lacking proper dialectics, "such being contains no transition from itself to ... anything individual". That is, for Spinoza, "absolute substance is not understood as the point of departure for *differences, particularization, individuation* [*Unterschiede, Vereinzelung, Individuation*] (*WW* 4:434, Jacobi-Review: 8, Hegel's emphases). This means that for Spinoza, according to Hegel, "everything is merely submerged and perishes in a substance which remain motionless within itself and out of which nothing ever resurfaces." [Es geht daher in der Substanz alles nur unter, sie ist unbewegt in sich, und kehrt aus ihr nichts zurück] (*ibid*). That in Spinoza individuality or mode is not properly conceptualized is a core of Hegel's criticism of Spinoza, and makes his famous "acosmism"-charge ["Akosmismus"-Vorwurf] against Spinoza (*EnzL*. §151Z, *WW* 20:164,177,191). Since my concern here is Hegel, not Spinoza, I do not want to enter to

clearly a Fichtean/Kantian category. However, the development of the category of "reciprocal action" is precisely that which effectuates the transition from essence to Concept, and for this reason, it does not properly belong to essence. "Reciprocal action", Hegel emphasizes, "stands on the threshold of the Concept [an der Schwelle des Begriffs]" (*EnzL*. §155Z).

the discussion whether this charge is correct or not.¹⁵³ I would like only to briefly mention that this charge does not mean that for Hegel Spinoza's modes do not exist. Rather, it means that in Spinoza's philosophy "the principle of difference or finitude does not attain the legitimacy befitting it" [das Prinzip der Differenz oder der Endlichkeit nicht zu seinem Rechte gelangt] (*EnzL*. §151Z). According to Hegel, although the modes or the individuals for Spinoza do exist, they are merely "transient" [vorübergehend] and "vanishing" [verschwindend] (*EnzL*. §151Z). Against substance, they are merely "atrophied" or "vestigial" [verkümmert] beings (*WW* 20:170). That is, they are a kind of being that are "eaten up" and "consumed" [aufgezehrrt] by substance (*WW* 20:189).¹⁵⁴

All this language of being "eaten up", "submerged", "transient", etc. is *very similar* to Hegel's *own* description of individuality (and the contingency of the individuals) in the logic of essence. Indeed, a main driving force of the transition from essence to the Concept is the lack of a rich conception of individuality in essence. However, although in Hegel's substance individuals are contingent and transitory, their manner of transitoriness is different from that of modes in Spinoza's substance. That is, although in the logic of essence there is only a weak conception of individuality (which makes it similar to Spinoza), *that* individuality is different from Spinoza. According to Hegel, insofar as the absolute is Spinoza's mode,

it is the self-externality of the absolute, the loss of itself in the mutability and contingency of being, its having passed over into its opposite *without the return into itself*; the manifoldness of form and content determinations lacking the character of totality. [so ist er das Außersichsein des Absoluten, der Verlust seiner

¹⁵³ Cf. Yitzhak Melamed (2010) for a helpful discussion.

¹⁵⁴ Hegel even makes a pun that in the same way that in Spinoza's philosophy, the individuals "disappear" [verschwinden] and are "consumed up", Spinoza himself died of "consumption" [Schwindsucht]. (*WW* 20:185).

in die Veränderlichkeit und Zufälligkeit des Seins, sein Übergegangensein ins Entgegengesetzte *ohne Rückkehr* in sich; die totalitätslose Mannigfaltigkeit der Form und Inhaltsbestimmungen.] (*WdL* II 193, *SL* 535, Hegel's emphasis)

According to Hegel, for Spinoza the movement from substance to modes is one of “condescendence” [“herabsteigen”, or “heruntersteigen”] (*WW* 20:170, 185). Once substance is condescended to the multiplicity of modes, there is “no return” to the substance. Precisely for this reason, this multiplicity remains without unity, hence, “totality-less”. Such movement of “condescendence” is conceptually analogous to the “oriental conception of *emanation*” [*Emanation*], in which

the absolute is the light which illumines itself. Only it not only illumines itself but also *emanates* [*strömt* auch *aus*]. Its emanations are *distancing* [*Entfernungen*] from its undimmed clarity; the successive productions are less perfect than the preceding ones from which they arise. The process of emanation is taken only as a *happening*, the becoming only as a progressive loss. Thus being increasingly obscures itself and night, the negative, is the final term of the series, which does not first return into the primal light. (*WdL* II:198, *SL* 538-9, underline mine)

That this movement remains “without return” means that substance *constitutes* modes, but it is *not constituted* by modes. Mode, that is, “is completely reduced to a mere being-positing [bloßen Gesetztsein]” (*WdL* II:195 *SL* 536). We can understand this claim through paying attention to Spinoza's definitions in the beginning of the book. (And Hegel's critique of Spinoza is for the most part based on his reading of the definitions in the first page of the *Ethics*, neglecting the rest of the book.) According to Spinoza, substance is “that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself; that is, that which does not need the concept of another thing, from which concept it must be formed” (E1d3). And mode is “that which is in something else, through which it is also conceived” (E1d5). That is, for Spinoza substance is *solely* defined in terms of internal determination.

(Substance is *Insichsein*.) And mode is *solely* defined in terms of external determination. (Mode is “in etwas Anderes” (*WW* 20:169)). Now, according to Hegel, it is unclear how modes can be *internal* to substance (since every determination is internal to substance), yet at the same time *external* to substance (since the definition of mode is that of exteriority). That is, once there is a gulf between *completely* internal determination of substance, and *completely* external determination of mode, it is not clear how this gulf can be overcome. For this reason, the relation of substance and mode, according to Hegel, remains under-determinate in Spinoza, and an example of “external reflection” (*WdL* II:195, *SL* 537).

This argument, I believe, should not be read as necessarily effective against Spinoza, but rather as a point through which Hegel can elaborate on his own *dialectical* method. Hegel thinks that the correct way to understand substance and mode is to understand them, contrary to Spinoza, as constituting a reflection-logical relationship. This means that substance is not only internally determined, but also it is externally determined (by modes). Similarly, modes are not only externally determined (by substance), but also they are internally determined. This implies that modes must have the quality of “reflection-into-self” [*Reflexion-in-sich*], through which they reflect the totality of substance into themselves. This is a principle that is, of course, absent in Spinoza’s philosophy, but can be complemented by a principle of another philosopher of the same historical period, the monad of Leibniz. (“The lack of *reflection-into-self*, from which both the Spinozistic exposition of the absolute and the emanation theory suffer is complemented in the notion of Leibnizian monad” *WdL* II:198, *SL* 539). Through the quality of reflection-into-self, the modes become self-relational, therewith, individuals;

hence, helping Hegel to get out of the impasse of Spinozist acosmism.¹⁵⁵

Because Spinoza defines substance in terms of pure internal determination, substance remains for him, according to Hegel, an “abstract determination” (*WW* 20:166) and a “motionless identity” [unbewegte Identität] (*WdL* II:197, *SL* 538). If substance stops at this stage, Hegel asserts, no “development”, no “activity”, no “Spirituality” would result. For this reason, Spinoza’s philosophy is that of “petrified” and “fixed” [starr] substantiality (*WW* 20:166). In contrast to Spinoza’s definition of substance, Hegel offers his own conception of substance, which is a *movement*, from itself to modes, and *simultaneously*, from modes to itself. (Substance is therefore “die zurückkehrende und aus sich selbst anfangende Bewegung” *WdL* II:195). As Hegel’s substance is this movement itself – and not a movement upon an unmoved thing – substance is “not that which is *equal with itself*, but that which *generates itself as equal*” (*WdL* II:194, *SL* 535). For Hegel, substance is not the “negation” of modes. It is instead the “negation of negation”, that is, the negation of modes that are already constituted by substance (*WW* 20:164). This obviously makes substance contradictory: although substance is necessarily constituted by modes, nevertheless, it retains its independence against modes.

That Hegel conceptualizes substance in terms of movement shows how he is distant from the traditional conception of substance. The concept of substance was introduced in western metaphysics to explain the subsistence of a self-same entity underneath change. With this conception of substance, a duality or *chorismos* was fixed

¹⁵⁵ “While Spinoza asserted the universality, the oneness of substance merely...Leibniz, by means of his fundamental principle of individuality, brings out the essentiality of the opposite aspect of Spinoza’s philosophy, being for self [Fürsichsein], the monad, but the monad regarded not as absolute notion, not yet as the I. The opposed principles, which were forced asunder, find their completion in each other, since Leibniz’s principle of individuation completed Spinoza’s system as far as outward aspect goes.” (*WW* 20:233, *LHP* III:325)

between the substance, which was posited as inert, and change, which was superimposed upon substance. Hegel, in overcoming the duality of change and self-sameness, integrates change within the definition of substance. Substance is that which generates and regenerates itself as identical with itself *through* the movement of change. As we will see later in more detail, this movement is the absolute power, which, through positing individuals and superseding them in the movement, is able to maintain its dynamical self-sameness¹⁵⁶.

It is wrong to think that Hegel's refutation of Spinoza in the logic is purely metaphysical. (As recent scholarship has demonstrated, Hegel's arguments against Spinoza, from purely metaphysical point of view, are at times not convincing)¹⁵⁷. Rather, Hegel's logic, as I have endeavored to show throughout the dissertation, is a historically specific ontology, which lays bare the fundamental structure of (social) reality in the modern world. According to Hegel, Spinoza's philosophy is an ontology fitting the pre-modern "oriental" world, where individuals are only regarded as "*merely* transitory" (*EnzL*. §151Z, my emphasis), without any constitutive role in the formation of the structure of the totality of society. In the modern world, where "the western principle of individuality" (*EnzL*. §151Z) has come to fruition, one needs another account of substance (i.e. Hegel's own) to capture this totality. In his discussion of Indian religion in particular and oriental religions in general, Hegel tells his students that

to characterize the East briefly, the Spirit does arise there, but the situation is that

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Georg Lukács' account: "Die neueren Einsichten über das Sein haben die statische, unveränderliche Konzeption der Substanz zerstört; daraus folgt jedoch keineswegs die Notwendigkeit ihres Leugnens innerhalb der Ontologie, sondern bloß die Erkenntnis ihres wesentlich dynamischen Charakters. Substanz ist, was sich im ewigen Wandel der Dinge, sich selbst wandelnd, in ihrer Kontinuität zu bewahren imstande ist." (*GLW* 14:83)

¹⁵⁷ See especially, Macherey (ibid), Melamed (ibid), and Sandkaulen (ibid)

the subject, the individuality, is not a person but has the character of being submerged [untergehend] in the objective. There the relation of substantiality is the dominating. [Das substantielle Verhältnis ist da das Herrschende]...The situation of the individual, the particular, is that of being only something negative in face of the substance. The highest achievement of such an individual is eternal blessedness which is only absorption in this substance, an extinction of consciousness, and so the annihilation of the subject and therefore of the difference between substance and subject. The highest state, therefore, is unconsciousness. In so far as individuals have not attained this blessedness but still exist on the earthly level, they are excluded from this unity of substance and individual; their situation and character is one without spirit and without substance, and, in relation to political freedom, they have no rights. [Sie sind Substanzlose und in Beziehung auf politischen Freiheit Rechtlose.] In this event their will is not a substantial will but one determined by caprice and natural contingency (e.g. by caste)—a being without inner consciousness.¹⁵⁸

This is an interesting passage in which Hegel blends ontology, religion and politics together. I put religion aside. According to Hegel, in the pre-modern world, the individual does not have any right, and for that reason, he is directly subsumed by the totality¹⁵⁹.

The mode of domination, therefore, is one of *immediate* domination. The relation between the state and the individual is a *one-way* relationship, in which the totality of the state does not “return back” to the individuals. Because the individual does not have any self-subsistence or self-determination properly understood, his position in society is

¹⁵⁸ Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*. Hrsg. Johannes Hoffmeister, Hamburg: F. Meiner. S.227; *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller, Oxford University Press, 1987, p167

¹⁵⁹ Cf. also the following passage: “Das christliche Princip ist, jeder einzelne als einzelner ist unendlicher Zweck. Bey dem orientalischen Principe verschwindet das Individuum und ist nur Accidenz des Monarchen oder der Priester. Es kann kein Staat bestehen ohne die Zwecke der Allgemeinheit; aber in unseren neueren Staaten ist gerade der Gesichtspunkt der Subjectivität überwiegend, für das Wohl des einzelnen wird sehr gesorgt.” (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Rechts*, Nachschrift Wannenmann 1817/18, *GW* 26.1: §90, S.100)

merely the result of “natural contingency”, not the result of his own decisions and deeds. We can ignore for now Hegel’s philosophical optimism, according to which in the modern capitalist world, the individuals are in fact self-determining. (From a logical point of view, this occurs in the transition from essence to the Concept. Now, we are still in the realm of essence.) Hegel’s own analysis of substance has shown that substance in the modern world has to be understood as constituted by the individuals, nevertheless, as having an independent status against them. The modern totality is also coercive upon individuals, but in contrast to the pre-modern world, the mode of coercion here is a *mediated* one. In the modern liberal capitalist society, the individuals do indeed have political and legal rights: they can vote, for example, or they are equal before law. They indeed enjoy a certain degree of (formal) freedom. As I have previously explained in detail, the mode of domination of totality over individuals is not *despite* this formal equality, formal freedom, and individuality, but precisely *through* them. The relationship of totality and individuals is not one of pre-modern *one-way* domination, but a *two-way* relationship, in which although the individuals constitute the totality, nevertheless, they are thoroughly coerced by the totality. Of course, there can be no talk of substantive freedom of self-determination of individuals here. Although the individuals might think that their achievement or failure is the result of their own freedom, as I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five, this freedom is only due to contingency. But as opposed to the pre-modern form of contingency, which had the quality of “naturalness” (as in the Indian caste system), this contingency is “posited” by the totality of society *as* contingency.

5-2- Hegel's Conception of Substance

I have previously argued that Hegel offers the ontology of absolute relationality in the logic of essence. The emergence of substance as the highest category of the logic of essence does not refute the ontology of absolute relationality, but it is its highest actualization. According to Hegel, absolute necessity or substance is “being simply and solely as reflection” [Sein schlechthin als Reflexion] (*WdL* II:217, *SL* 554). That is, substance is not a being *underlying* relation; thereby excluding relation, but the relation itself. “Just as the *light* of nature is neither *something* nor a *thing*, but its being is only its showing or shining”, substance is simply totality qua relation which manifests itself in all individuals (*WdL* II:218, *SL* 554). Whereas for Spinoza substance is a thing, for Hegel substance is “relation, because it is distinguishing whose moments are themselves its whole totality” [Sie ist Verhältnis, weil sie Unterscheiden ist, dessen Momente selbst ihre ganze Totalität sind.] (*WdL* II:217, *SL* 555) Substance for Hegel is “the *relation* of substantiality” [das *Verhältnis* der Substantialität, my emphasis], a reflective relation that obtains between the totality of substance and the totality of accidents. Substance, Hegel emphasizes, “is the totality of the whole and encompasses accidentality within it, and accidentality [Akzidentalität] is the whole substance itself” (*WdL* II:220, *SL* 556).

According to Kant, “the determinations of a substance, which are nothing but particular ways in which it exists, are called accidents. They are always real, because they concern the existence of substance.” (*KdrV* B229 A186) Although Hegel is decisively different from Kant, in that he denies any two-world conception of reality (substance-in-appearance vs. thing-in-itself), his conception of the relation of substance and accidents is similar to Kant. Substance is not separable from accidents; accidents are precisely the

way that substance exists in actuality. Substance, Hegel emphasizes, is “neither the unreflected immediate, nor an abstract being standing behind existence and appearance, but it is immediate actuality itself, and this as absolute reflectedness –into-self, as a *subsisting in-and-for-itself*” (*WdL* II:219, *SL* 555). Substance is not a potentiality that is yet to be actualized; nor an interiority that is to be externalized; but it is “*appearing totality*” [*scheinende Totalität*], and as such it is identical with accidentality.

I have previously explained that the ontology of absolute relationality does not commit Hegel to a pure processualism of Heraclitean type denying any ontological identity; rather, Hegel derives identity *from* and *through* relationality. In substance, which is the highest ontological category and regressively provides the bedrock for all other determinations, identity is equated with relation; and rest is equated with movement. According to Hegel, “the movement of accidentality”, as the pure actuality, “is the *actuality* [*Aktuosität*] of substance”, and this pure movement is equal with “*the tranquil coming forth of itself*” [*ruhiges Hervorgehen ihrer selbst*]. (*WdL* II:220, *SL* 556). Actuality is the highest form of identity solely achieved through movement. The substantiality of a tree, to give an example from Marcuse, is the “effective power” [*wirkende Macht*] of the tree, which “holds together its changing *states* as belonging to the *same* tree, and which, as a self-moving power, allows them to happen.” The self-sameness of the tree, that is, is achieved only through the tree continuously positing and superseding these states (Marcuse 1987:99).

In Aristotle’s conception of substance in the *Categories*, whereas accidents are dependent upon substance, substance is itself independent from accidents. (Substance is the object of predication, but it is not itself predicable.) (*Categories*: 5). For Hegel, as I

have been explaining so far, the relation of dependency is two-way: accidents, of course, are dependent upon substance, but substance – also – is dependent on, and constituted by, accidents. Nevertheless, although substance is constituted by accidents, it retains, *contradictorily*, its independent status, positing accidents as its own presupposition. In a typically dialectical formulation Hegel writes, “substance in its determining does not begin from accidentality as if this were already an *other* to start with and only now were posited as determinateness, but the two are *one* actus. Substance as power *determines itself*; but this determining is immediately itself the sublation of the determining, and the return.” (*WdL* II:223, *SL* 558)¹⁶⁰ That substance both “posits” the accidents and “returns” from the accident makes Hegel’s substance contradictory, a quality which is totally foreign to Spinoza’s substance. According to Spinoza, substance cannot contain contradiction, because contradiction would lead to the self-destruction of substance. (Cf. E3P5: “Things are of a contrary nature, that is, they cannot be in the same subject, insofar as one can destroy the other”.) In contrast, for Hegel, substance is achieved through contradiction, or more precisely, *is* contradiction.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Also: “It [i.e. substance] is the beginning from itself which first is the positing of this self from which the beginning is made” [das Anfangen von sich selbst ist erst das Setzen dieses Selbsts, von dem das Anfangen ist] (*WdL* II:220, *SL* 556).

¹⁶¹ (1) “What we lack in Spinoza is thus the idea of contradiction, of the unity of opposites, which is the source of movement, and which affects the absolute, God himself. Spinoza’s philosophy lacks the contradiction of an absolute which is the source and fount of all particular, and yet which has particularity in it; which is over and against the particular and which nevertheless contains it.” (Taylor, 1977:281) (2) “It is highly unlikely that Spinoza would have much sympathy with Hegel’s self-negating dialectic, insofar as the latter strongly conflicts with the doctrine of the *conatus*.” (Melamed, *ibid*: 83)

5-3- Substance as “Absolute Power”

My aim in this dissertation has been to show how essence has to be understood in terms of power. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, the basic form of the relation of power in the logic of essence is the relation of opposition, where the positive and the negative are constituted through the asymmetrical relation between them. In the present chapter, I have argued that power is implicitly present in Hegel’s conception of actuality, although he does not explicitly state it. My arguments get their final support in the end of the logic of essence, where Hegel profusely uses the concept of power to explain the structure of substance.

One can recognize two aspects of the power of substance in Hegel: (1) the power of substance to sustain and reproduce itself, and (2) the power of substance over accidents¹⁶². These two aspects are for Hegel united, as it is only through exercising its power over accidents that substance is able to maintain itself. To put in differently, accidentality is already substantiality, and the power of substance over accidents is in fact the power of substance over itself.¹⁶³ Now, we have to carve out in some detail how substance is powerful over accidents. One can recognize two aspects of it: (1) The power of substance is *constitutive* of accidents. Accidents are what they are, through being located within the relations of power that make substance what it is. Hegel even uses the language of inherence to express how substance is constitutive of accidents. He writes,

¹⁶² It is important to emphasize that for Hegel accidents are already *individuals*, which participate in the making of substance (such as a leaf in a tree). This must be contrasted with Aristotelian accidents, which are *properties* of individuals (such as the greenness of a leaf).

¹⁶³ Hegel writes, “Substance is power, and power that is *reflected into itself* and not merely transitory [bloß übergehende], but that posits *determinations and distinguishes them from itself*. As self-relating in its determining, it is *itself* that which it posits as a negative or makes it into a *positedness*.” (WdL II:222, SL 558)

substance is “the being in *all* being” [das Sein in *allem* Sein] (*WdL* II:219, *SL* 555))¹⁶⁴.

(2) The power of substance over accidents is *causal*. We have learned previously that for Hegel something is actual insofar it is effective. Thus, even in actuality the reference to causality is present. Now, Hegel explicitly states that, “it is as cause that substance has actuality” (*WdL* II:224, *SL* 559). According to Hegel, substance exerts a rich array of causal powers over accidents. He writes,

Substance manifests itself through actuality with its content into which it translates the possible, as *creative* [*schaffende*] power, and through the possibility to which it reduces the actual, as *destructive* [*zerstörende*] power. But the two are identical, the creation is destructive and the destruction is creative; for the negative and the positive, possibility and actuality, are absolutely united in substantial necessity. (*WdL* II:220, *SL* 556)

Substance both creates and destroys the accidents. From the standpoint of totality of substance, any destruction of accidents is at the same time re-creation of substance, and any re-creation of substance is accompanied by destruction of accidents. (Think of it as a tree, which recreates itself through creating and destroying the individual leaves.)¹⁶⁵

According to Hegel, the power of substance over accidents is not direct.

Substance is not a “thing” that *directly* causes accidents to be or to cease to be. Rather, as substance is the process of relationality that obtains between accidents, the power of substance over accident is always *mediated* by the interaction of accidents with each

¹⁶⁴ Cf. with Spinoza’s substance: “Whatever exists exists in God, and nothing can exist or be conceived without God” (E1p15)

¹⁶⁵ The rich causal power that substance exerts over accidents means that Hegel’s conception of substance is far from the Aristotelian one. Not everything that is considered as substance in Aristotle’s metaphysics can be counted as substance for Hegel. A chair for Hegel is not a substance, or if it is, it is only a very defective form of substance. For Hegel, only human societies and living organisms are adequate to the concept of substance, and are thus *true* substances.

other. Hegel emphasizes that substance is “as *power* the *mediating*” [als *Macht* das *Vermittelnde*] (*WdL* II:221, *SL* 557), (This point has important consequences for Hegel’s social ontology that I will discuss in the next section.) According to Hegel,

The accidents as such —and there is a plurality of them since plurality is one of the determinations of being — have *no power* over one another. They are the simply affirmative something, or the something that is for itself [das seiende oder für sich seiende Etwas], existing things of manifold properties, or wholes consisting of parts, self-subsistent parts, forces, which require solicitation from one another and have one another for condition. Insofar as such an accidental seems [scheint] to exercise power over another, it is the power of substance which embraces both within itself; as negativity it posits an unequal value [einen ungleichen Wert setzt] determining the one as a ceasing-to-be and the other with a different content as a coming-to-be, or the former as passing over into its possibility, the latter into actuality — ever sundering itself into the differences of form and content, and ever purging itself of this one-sidedness, yet in this very purging it has fallen back into determination and bifurcation. One accident, then, expels another only because its own *subsisting* is this totality of form and content itself in which it and its other equally perish [untergeht]. (*WdL* II:221, *SL* 556-7)

This is an amazing passage that is articulated in a clearly dialectical way. Note that Hegel uses the language of illusion [Schein] to describe the power of accidents over one another. As we have learned in Chapter One, illusion has a specific ontological status in the logic of essence. It is a self-contradictory being. It *is* a being that at the same time *is not*. It exists, but it does not exist by its own, or for its own sake, but exists only as a moment of essence. Accidents do exert power over each other, yet the power of accidents over each other is an illusion. In fact, it is the power of substance that works through them, positing an “unequal value” between them, making one more powerful than the other. In order to understand the ontological status of power of accidents over each other, one has to accept

both claims at the same time: that accidents are powerful over each other, yet at the same time, they do not have any power, but are embraced by the power of totality of substance, which effectuates itself through them.

In order to understand how the power of substance over accidents is mediated with the power of accidents over each other, one has to look at the dialectical development of the category of “causality” for Hegel. First and foremost, one has to emphasize that for Hegel, the category of causality does not have any ontological or explanatory primacy, as it does in mechanistic sciences. (I will explain this point in more detail in Chapter Five.) Causality in mechanistic sciences presupposes an atomistic ontology, where things that have causal power over each other are conceived to be self-subsistent independently of each other. (The paradigmatic examples are Humean: the billiard balls that hit each other.) In contrast, Hegel derives causality from substantiality. This means that substantiality has primacy over causality, and that causality is always embedded in the relation of substantiality which makes cause and effect what they are. Indeed, the first form of causality that Hegel develops out of the relation of substantiality – the “formal causality” [formelle Kausalität] – is nothing but the causality of substance over itself.¹⁶⁶ As both cause and effect are substance regarded one time as that which causes, and another time, as that which is caused, Hegel concludes, “*consequently, effect*

¹⁶⁶ “It is therefore as cause that substance first has actuality. But this actuality in which its *in-itself*, its determinateness in the relation of substantiality, is now posited *as determinateness, is effect*; consequently the actuality which substance has as cause, it has *only in its effect*. This is the *necessity* which is cause. It is actual substance because substance as power determines itself, but is at the same time cause, because it explicates this determinateness or posits it as positedness; thus it posits its actuality as positedness or as effect.” (*WdL* II:244, *SL* 559)

contains nothing whatever that cause does not contain. Conversely, cause contains nothing which is not in its effect." (WdL II: 224, SL 559).¹⁶⁷

The formal causality of substance over itself is, however, mediated by the second form of causality that Hegel calls "determinate relation of causality" [bestimmte Kausalitätsverhältnis], which Hegel identifies with "finite causality". He writes:

This now is *the relation of causality in its reality [Realität] and finitude*. As formal, it is the infinite relation of absolute power whose content is pure manifestation or necessity. As finite causality, on the other hand, it has a *given* content and exhausts itself in an external difference in this identical content which in its determinations is one and the same substance. (WdL II:225, SL 560)

The finite causality is the causality of finite accidents over each other. The finite causality, Hegel reminds us, leads to an "infinite regress", since what is a cause is already an effect of something else, ad infinitum. The relation of cause and effect in this relation is "external", and there is no such total overlapping of cause and effect, which was the case in the formal causality.¹⁶⁸ The infinite regress of cause and effect is the mark of "impotence" [Ohnmacht] of accidents to "attain" and "hold fast" to a "unity" (WdL II:231, SL 565); such a unity must be bestowed on accidents by substance.

¹⁶⁷ Note that Hegel emphasizes it is one and the same substance that determines itself (as cause), and is being determined (as effect): "Substance in its determining does not begin from accidentality as if this were already an *other to start with* and only now were posited as determinateness, but the two are one *actuality*. Substance as power *determines itself*; but this determining is immediately itself the sublating of the determining, and the return. *It determines itself* — *it*, the determinant, is thus the *immediate* and that which is itself already determinate; in determining *itself*, it therefore posits this already determinate as *determined* and thus has sublated the positedness and has returned into itself." (WdL II:223, SL 558)

¹⁶⁸ To be more precise, Hegel thinks that even in the "determinate causality", there is some unity of cause and effect, but this unity is not complete. Rain is the cause of wetness of streets, but the same water that constitutes rain is present in the wetness of streets. Thus, there is a unity between cause and effect, yet this unity is present, only insofar as the material cause (water) is concerned. Insofar as the formal cause is concerned, the two are distinct from each other (the form of water in street is distinct from the form of water in rain).

This brings us to third and final form of causality, which is the unity of the first two. The real causality now occurs in a systematic fashion, which makes the chain of causality self-enclosed. Hegel calls the third form of causality “action and interaction” [Wirkung und Gegenwirkung], which occurs between “active” and “passive” substance and together constitute a “*substantial identity*” (WdL II:233, SL 566).¹⁶⁹ We can conceive the passive substance as the milieu of externality, where there is a *horizontal* relation of causality between accidents that do not have power over each other. However, the passive substance is at the same time determined by the active substance, which exerts power over it. That is, the *horizontal* relation of causality (of passive substance) is at the same time determined by the *vertical* relation of causality (of active substance over passive substance.) Hegel talks about “action” and “reaction” of active substance and passive substance over each other, since active substance is *not* a petrified “thing” which determines the passive substance in a one-way manner, but is sensitive to the reaction of passive substance on it, although in the end it is the active substance that makes substance what it is. We can make sense of this dynamic conception of causality of substance – the interdependence of passive and active substance, yet ultimately under the terms that eventually active substance sets – in the organic life. The parts of organism are in a

¹⁶⁹ Just to emphasize a point that has already been made: in ordinary thought we tend to use the categories of action and reaction for individuals that are self-subsistent and independent from each other (like two countries that act and react upon each other.) Hegel’s usage is different, since action and reaction obtains between substance conceived one time as active, and the same substance conceived as passive. Hegel writes: “Each of these determinations *sublates itself in its positing*, and *posits itself in its sublating*; what is present here is not an *external transition* of causality from one substrate to another; on the contrary, this *becoming-other* of causality is at the same time its *own positing*. Causality therefore *presupposes* its own self or *conditions itself*. The identity, the substrate, which was previously only *in itself* or *implicit*, is therefore, now *determined as presupposition* or *posited over against* the *active* causality, and the *reflection* which was previously only *external* to the identity, now stands in a *relationship* to it.” (WdL II:233, SL 566)

horizontal relation of causality with each other (it is heart that pumps the blood), but such horizontal relation only occurs in the framework of a vertical relation of causality of totality of organism over all the parts (over both the heart and the blood)¹⁷⁰.

The *vertical* relation of causality of totality of substance over accidents is not visible. This invisible relation of power, however, becomes manifest, when accidents transgress from the boundaries that substance sets for them. The manifestation of power in this way is “violence” [Gewalt] which is able to coercively restore the normal status of substance as a self-maintaining entity. (“Violence is the *manifestation of power*, or *power as external*” [Die Gewalt ist die *Erscheinung der Macht* oder die *Macht als Äußerliches.*] (WdL II:235, SL 567)). The phenomenon of violence shows that the vertical relation of causality of substance over accidents is capable of *overriding* the horizontal relation of causality of accidents with each other. Such overriding, however, always occurs *through* the horizontal causality of accidents over one another. Hegel thus talks about the necessity of violence, when there is such a transgression:

Therefore not only is it possible to do violence to that which suffers it, but also violence *must* be done to it; that which acts violently on the other can do so only because it is the power over it, the power in which it *manifests* both itself and the other. Through violence, passive substance is only *posited* as what it is in truth, namely, to be only something *posited*. (WdL II:235, SL 567)¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Although Hegel does not refer to Spinoza in his explication of causality, it is plausible to see the development of the category of causality in Hegel’s logic as a dialectical reconstruction of Spinoza’s conception of “immanent cause” to “transitive cause”, which are ultimately united in the relation between “active nature” (*natura naturans*) and “passive nature” (*natura naturata*). (See E1p18 and E1p29s). For a helpful discussion of Spinoza’s conception of immanent cause and how it relates to transitive cause (without referring to Hegel), See (Melamed 2013: 61-66)

¹⁷¹ The transition from “action and reaction” to the final category of the logic of essence, “reciprocal action” (*Wechselwirkung*) is the transition that abolishes the relation of power constitutive of essence, and instigates the transition to the logic of Concept. Whereas in “action

6- Conclusion: Substance and Social Ontology

A main debate in philosophy of social sciences is the debate between “individualists” and “holists”. The debate has “ontological” and “methodological” dimensions. The individualist is one who thinks that *only* individuals are real (ontological dimension), and all facts about society must be explained in terms of facts about individuals (methodological dimension). By contrast, the holists believe that social wholes are real, and have both ontological and explanatory primacy over individuals¹⁷². In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel recognizes the debate, and strongly sides with holism:

There are always only two possible viewpoints in the ethical realm: either one starts from substantiality, or one proceeds atomistically and moves upward from the basis of individuality [Einzelheit]. This latter viewpoint excludes Spirit, because it leads only to an aggregation, whereas spirit is not something individual, but the unity of the individual and the universal. (*GPR* §156Z)

In this section, I explain the implications of the logic of essence for social ontology. (In the next chapter, I substantiate these implications through a detailed explanation of Marx’s conception of the totality of capital in capitalism.) To emphasize the point that I have already made, the social ontology based on the logic of essence is critical, not affirmative. I solely focus on the structural issues. The main points of the essence-logical social ontology are the following:

and reaction”, it is the active substance that ultimately determines the passive substance, in “reciprocal action”, “each is at the same time active and passive substance in relation to the other; [and] any distinction between the two has been sublated” (*WdL* II:238, *SL* 569). Explicating this transition (and how it translates into social philosophy) requires another book.

¹⁷² For a helpful summary of the debate between individualists and holists and its history, See Julie Zahle (2007:311ff), and Julie Zahle & Finn Collin (2014, Chapter 1). For an older and strong defense of holism in social sciences especially with reference to Althusser, See Susan James (1984)

6-1- The totality of society is sui generis.

According to the logic of essence, the totality of society exists in its own right, and independently of individuals. We can distinguish three aspects of the sui generis character of the totality of society, (a) according to its composition, (b) according to its causal powers, and (related to (b)) (c) according to its capacity to be violent.

(a) According to Hegel, totality is not the aggregate of individuals; rather it is the structure that constitutes individuals as its moments. However, the fact that the social structure (or totality) exists in its own right does not mean that it is a hidden kernel that emanates itself in individuals. Social totality is not separable from individuals that form it, although it is emphatically not reducible to them.

(b) According to Hegel, although social totality is imperceptible, it is causally efficacious on individuals. Social totality is able to produce and reproduce itself through individuals. (We will learn in the next chapter that capital is a self-maintaining system that is able to reproduce itself through individuals.) However, the causal power of social totality over individuals is not immediate. It is rather *always* mediated by the action of individuals upon each other. (We will learn in the next chapter that capital is not powerful over individuals immediately, but the power of capital is *always* mediated by the power of a particular capitalist over a particular worker.)

(c) One other reason that social totality for Hegel is real is that it has the capacity to causally *override* the decision of individuals, and thus turn its power into a manifest violence. (To reiterate: this overriding, however, is *always* mediated through the action of individuals upon each other.) In *Capital*, Marx reports how the economic laws of

capitalism destroyed millions of lives of small-scale textile manufacturers in 19th century, and we can observe the same dynamics nowadays.

We can understand the phenomenon of violence of totality with reference to the scope of freedom of individuals. (In Chapter Five, I will discuss the kind of freedom that individuals have within the absolute power of totality in detail.) Individuals, to use a concept from Georg Lukács, have some “concretely possible space for actions” [konkret möglicher Handlungsspielraum] (*GLW* 14:236), in which they are free to act as they are pleased to do; but the contours of such space is determined by the necessity obtained through the totality of society. With the conceptual apparatus of the logic of being, Hegel explains this limited space for action in terms of “measure” [Maß]. With reference to the Greek conception of fate and “nemesis”, he maintains that individuals are allowed to enjoy certain degree of “everything human: wealth, honor, power, and likewise joy, pain, etc”; but if this measure is “overstepped”, it directly leads to “ruin” and “demise” (*EnzL*. §107Z). This is indeed the manifestation of power as violence which would reestablish the self-maintaining activity of substance. “What is presumptuous, what makes itself too great, too high”, Hegel writes, “is reduced to the other extreme of being brought to nothing, so that the mean of measure and mediocrity is restored” (*WdL* I:390, *SL* 329). (We will see in a moment how the Greek conception of fate is still at work in capitalism, although in an altered form).¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Although Hegelian view is different from Durkheim’s – the former is dialectical, the latter is not – it is worth quoting a passage from Durkheim that captures the coercive character of society in a way that is quite close to Hegel: “I am not obliged to speak French with my fellow-countrymen nor to use the legal currency, but I cannot possibly do otherwise. If I tried to escape this necessity, my attempt would fail miserably. As an industrialist I am free to apply the technical methods of former centuries, but by doing so I should invite certain ruin. Even when I

6-2- The totality of society is contradictory.

According to Hegel, (1) totality of society is solely constituted through the interaction of individuals. Therefore, the totality of society is a *result*. (2) Yet, the totality is present, so to speak, from the *beginning*, forcing individuals to behave according to its logic. This makes the totality essentially contradictory. To put it differently, although it is individuals that make the society, society is impervious to their action, and has an independent existence from them.

6-3- Individuals are dispensable.

Individuals are only occupying the slots that the social totality provides them. That is, individuals are only “bearers” of the social relations (Marx’s term), or “functionaries” of the social institutions that they embody (Adorno’s term), or “supports” of the social system (Althusser’s term). The power of individuals over each other is by virtue of slots that they occupy, and not by virtue of their personal characteristics, which are (from the standpoint of totality) contingent. (I will explain in detail the mode of this contingency in Chapter Five). It is important to emphasize that these social slots do not exist above or beyond individuals, and are always occupied by individuals. Yet, contradictorily, these slots are relatively enduring, and therefore exist independently of individuals.

Moreover, although individuals are necessary for the production and reproduction of totality, a particular individual is contingent; he or she can be or not be. (According to

free myself from these rules and violate them successfully, I am always compelled to struggle with them. When finally overcome, they make their constraining power felt by the resistance they offer.” (Durkheim 1964:3, quoted by Bhaskar 1998:43)

Marx, as we will see later, there must be always some workers who sell their labor power, but a particular worker can change his social position and even become a capitalist, and this so-called social mobility does not change the structure of society in capitalism.)

6-4- The totality of society is both enabling and restricting.

We have learned that substance has both creative and destructive power over individuals, and that creation and destruction are both moments of the same process of self-maintenance of substance. In the realm of social ontology, we can say that social structure is both limiting and enabling for individuals, or power is both restrictive and productive. To give an example, in capitalism all economic relations has to be mediated by money. Thus, those activities that do not result in saleable products are doomed to be destroyed or devalued. (The care work that typically women do at home tend to be conceived as not being a work, or tend to be severely devalued). Yet, although the exchange relations impose severe restrictions on human activities, it is at the same time enabling. (The traditional hierarchical values in paternalistic societies can potentially – but not necessarily – be diminished or abolished through impersonal relations of exchange.)

6-5- The power of totality over individuals is non-volitional and impersonal.

In order to understand Hegel's conception of the power of totality of society (i.e. substance), it is helpful to compare and contrast it with John Searle's conception of power. According to Searle, if something is to be designated as power, it has to satisfy

two criteria (2010: 151-2): Firstly, it should be clear who is exactly the agent of power, and who is exactly the patient of power (“exactness constraint”). Secondly, it must be intentional. For Searle, “the concept of power is logically tied to the concept of intentional exercise of power” (ibid: 152) (“intentionality constraint”). Searle’s conception of power is a philosophical articulation of common-sense conception of power in the tradition of liberalism, and contrasting it with Hegel shows how Hegel is far from this tradition.

For Hegel, the power of totality of society over individuals does not satisfy Searle’s constraints. Firstly, the power of totality of society is not “exact”, since the agent of power is not a thing or a person that can be located. It is rather the unobservable structure that constitutes individuals. Secondly, the power of totality (substance) is not “intentional”. From the logical point of view, there is no intentionality and volition in the logic of essence, and such categories can only be developed within the framework of the logic of Concept, where freedom is being addressed.¹⁷⁴

The *non*-intentional *impersonal* power of totality over individuals – Hegel associates with the concept of “fate” [Schicksal], which makes the principle of ancient Greek religion. In contrast to modern Christian form of religion, Hegel believes, the gods of ancient Greece are not – precisely speaking – “personal” [persönlich]. They are rather

¹⁷⁴ One must distinguish between *social* and *political* domination of totality over individuals in Hegel. Whereas the former is non-intentional and impersonal, the latter is clearly both intentional and personal. Hegel’s conception of the political is complicated, and discussing it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. See especially *GPR* §279, where Hegel develops the concept of political sovereignty. Here Hegel identifies “sovereignty” with the full-blown subjectivity, which is both personal and endowed with will. For Hegel, political domination has to be necessarily exercised by “one individual”, which he identifies with the “monarch”. From the logical point of view, while the locus of discussion of social domination is the logic of essence, the locus of political domination is the logic of the Concept.

“mere personifications that as such do not *know themselves*, but are only *known*” [bloß Personifikationen, die als solche sich nicht *selbst wissen*, sondern nur *gewußt* werden] (*EnzL*. §147Z). That is, the Greek gods do not have self-consciousness; they do not have any intentional state and cannot will anything. Like the individuals, these gods are “subjugated” to an alien “fate” which is itself “undisclosed necessity and thus as utterly impersonal, devoid of self and blind” [die unenthüllte Notwendigkeit und somit als das durchaus Unpersönliche, Selbstlose und Blinde] (*ibid*)¹⁷⁵. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel associates “fate” with “mechanical process” and writes,

Power [Macht], as *objective universality* and as violence [Gewalt] directed *against* the object, is what is called fate — a conception that falls within mechanism in so far as it is called *blind*... The fate of the living being is in general the *species*, which manifests itself through the fleetingness of the living individuals, which in their *actual individuality* do not possess the species as species. (*WdL* II:421, *SL* 720)

Although it is the “fate” of individuals that through their life and death perpetuate the existence of a species, the species, properly speaking, does not have any *volition*, which *purposively* makes the individual live and die. An individual living being, according to Hegel, is “*external*” to itself; its being, properly speaking, lies not within itself, but in the being of species. The individual living being, therefore, is simply “contingent” whose fate is “extinction”. That the individual living being contributes to the continuation of species is not the result of any volition on its part, or from the species’ part: the necessity involved here is – “blind”. Although the relation of individual living being and species is

¹⁷⁵ Cf. also with Hegel’s early *Systementwürfe III*, where he compares the Greek religion with the absolute religion of Christianity. The Greek religion, Hegel writes, is “die mythische, ein Spiel, das des Wesens nicht würdig, ohne Gründlichkeit und Tiefe ist, wo das Tiefe das unbekannte Schicksal ist. Die absolute Religion aber ist, das Tiefe, das zu Tage herausgetreten, diß Tiefe ist das Ich, es ist der Begriff, die absolute reine Macht”. (*GW* 8.281)

a good illustration of the concept of fate, we should not take this illustration too literally; since, Hegel a few lines later reminds us:

Only self-consciousness has a fate in the proper meaning of the word [Ein eigentliches Schicksal hat nur das Selbstbewusstsein]; because it *is free*, and therefore in the *individuality* of its ego possesses a being that is absolutely *in and for itself* and can oppose itself to its objective universality and *estrangle* itself from it. By this very separation, however, it excites [erregt] against itself the mechanical relationship of a fate. In order therefore that this fate should be able to have power over it, it must have given itself some determinateness or other conflicting with the essential universality; it must have committed a *deed*. (ibid).

The relation of the individual human being to universality is not a simply “natural” relationship of individual/species of other living beings; since the individual has the capacity to distance itself from his obligations given to it through his location in the totality of society. Yet, if we understand the totality of society in terms of substance, the mechanical process of fate still holds. If an individual is so bold that “resists” the absolute power of substance and commits a “deed” against it, by doing so, he initiates a mechanical process of revenge of fate, which “overpowers” [Überwältigung] him and leads to his demolition. The “relative lack of self-subsistence” of the individual, Hegel emphasizes, “manifests itself in the fact that its *individuality* lacks the *capacity* for *what is imparted* [to it by the universal] [das Mitgeteilte] and therefore is disrupted [zersprengt wird] by it, because it [the individual] cannot constitute itself as *subject* in this universal, or make this latter its *predicate*” (WdL II:420 , SL 720). With the referral to Greek tragedies, Hegel in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* develops the dialectic of individual and fate, and conceptualizes the action of the individual *against* fate as a “crime”, which

immediately and mechanically, brings about her proper “punishment” by fate¹⁷⁶. That is, the deed of the individual against society cannot change the society; since “the ethical” [das Sittliche], Hegel emphasizes, “as the absolute *essence* and at the same time the absolute *power*, cannot suffer any inversion of its content” (*PhG* §466).

Hegel obviously thinks that the concept of fate belongs to the ancient world, and modernity is a *disenchanted* world, in which fate does not play any important role. (“The ancients, as is well known, construed necessity as *fate* and the modern standpoint is, by contrast, the standpoint of *consolation* [*Trost*]” (*EnzL*. §147Z)). The dissolution of the concept of fate in the modern world for Hegel is closely tied up with the development of individuality. The individual in modernity has the right to be recognized by the social order as individual, and should reciprocally find his reconciliation and consolation in the latter. It is exactly for this reason that in the official locus of Hegel’s social and political philosophy, the *Philosophy of Right*, the concept of fate does not have any significant role. However, in contrast to Hegel, as Marx has shown us (in the section of the “Fetishism of Commodities” in the first chapter of *Capital*), although capitalist modernity is *disenchanted* in respect to gods and religious thinking, it is at the same time *re-enchanted* through the power of economic sphere that exists independently of individuals, and coerces them to follow its logic.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, as we will see in the next chapter, Marx explicitly calls the power of capital as a “fate” [Verhängnis] that exerts alien power over individuals. For the same reason, Adorno calls the totality of society, which for him is

¹⁷⁶ Cf. The section entitled “Ethical action, human and divine knowledge, guilt and fate” [Die sittliche Handlung, das menschliche und göttliche Wissen, die Schuld und das Schicksal] (*PhG* §463ff)

¹⁷⁷ In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx explicitly calls the reification of economic and social relations in capitalism as “the religion of everyday life.” (*MEW* 25:838, C III: 969)

primarily formed through economy, as a “spell” [Bann] that nobody can escape from. However, despite the similarities, the difference between fate in the ancient world and in capitalism must be noted. Whereas in the ancient world, fate is simply *given* irrespective of individuals, in capitalism the economic fate is solely produced by the interaction of individuals, although in the end exists independently of them. It is for this reason that Hegel’s ontology of substance in the *Science of Logic*, in which individuals and substance are in a reflection-logical relation with each other, precisely captures the specificity of the power of economy in capitalism.

The reflection-logical relation of individuals and substance drives us to reconsider Hegel’s conception of power in relation to the two criteria of power for Searle. We have learned that the power of totality over individuals is never immediate, but it is *always* mediated by the action of individuals over each other. Therefore, although the power of totality is non-intentional and impersonal, that power has to always be mediated by the intentional and personal power of individuals over each other. (Thus, in this second aspect, “intentionality constraint” and “exactness constraint” are satisfied.). As we will see in the next chapter, although capital exerts a non-intentional and anonymous power over individuals, that power nonetheless must always be mediated by the action of the living capitalists (endowed with consciousness and will) over the workers. In other words, although in capitalism individuals are functionaries of the social position that they occupy, nonetheless, there always must be individuals (in their physical and mental existence) that occupy the social position, for which they remain only functionaries.

Chapter 4: The Totality of Capital

It is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality. The category of totality, the all-pervasive domination of the whole over the parts is the essence of the method which Marx took over from Hegel and brilliantly transformed into the foundations of a wholly new science....Proletarian science is revolutionary not just by virtue of its revolutionary content which it opposes to bourgeois society, but above all because of its method. *The domination of the category of totality is the bearer of the principle of revolution in science.* (Lukács 1971 [1923]:27, original emphasis)¹⁷⁸

[In capitalism, capital] is a general illumination, which bathes all the other colors and modifies their particularity. It is a particular ether which determines the specific gravity of every being which has materialized within it. (Marx, *MEW* 42:40, *G* 107)

¹⁷⁸ “Nicht die Vorherrschaft der ökonomischen Motive in der Geschichtserklärung unterscheidet entscheidend den Marxismus von der bürgerlichen Wissenschaft, sondern der Gesichtspunkt der Totalität. Die Kategorie der Totalität, die allseitige, bestimmende Herrschaft des Ganzen über die Teile ist das Wesen der Methode, die Marx von Hegel übernommen und originell zur Grundlage einer ganz neuen Wissenschaft umgestaltet hat....Das gründlich Revolutionäre der proletarischen Wissenschaft besteht nicht bloß darin, daß sie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft revolutionäre Inhalte gegenüberstellt, sondern in allererster Reihe in dem revolutionären Wesen der Methode selbst. *Die Herrschaft der Kategorie der Totalität ist der Träger des revolutionären Prinzips in der Wissenschaft.*”

1- The Critique of Methodological Individualism in Analytical Marxism

1-1- Two Main Pillars of Analytical Marxism: Methodological Individualism and the Primacy of Causal Explanations

The main task of Jon Elster's magisterial *Making Sense of Marx* (1985) is to develop and defend the thesis that Marx was a methodological individualist. By methodological individualism Elster means,

the doctrine that *all* social phenomena – their structure and their change – are in principle explicable in ways that *only* involve individuals – their properties, their goals, their beliefs and their actions (ibid: 5, emphasis added).

Elster regards methodological individualism as a form of “reductionism”. In the same way that in biology the explanation at the level of organisms and cells must be replaced with the explanation at the level of molecules, Elster asserts, in social sciences the explanation at the level of social structures and wholes must be replaced with the explanation at the level of individuals. Thus, according to Elster, explanation in social sciences should follow a three-tiered procedure:

First, there is causal explanation of mental states, such as desires and beliefs...Next, there is intentional explanation of individual action in terms of the underlying beliefs and desires... Finally, there is causal explanation of aggregate phenomena in terms of the individual actions that go into them (ibid: 4).

According to Elster, scientific explanation is primarily explanation in terms of cause and effect. By going from macro to micro, that is, from more aggregate phenomena to less aggregate phenomena, we can approach the ideal of providing a continuous chain of cause and effect. In doing so, Elster holds, we can effectively avoid spurious explanations, namely, those explanations that invoke merely apparent causes instead of real causes

(ibid: 4). One prominent mode of spurious explanation is holistic explanation that substitutes causal explanations with a vague reference to totality. Thus, against holism Elster emphasizes,

To explain is to provide a *mechanism*, to open up the black box and show the nuts and bolts, the cogs and wheels, the desires and beliefs that generate the aggregate outcome (ibid: 5).

As Elster considers methodological individualism to be the correct scientific method, quite expectedly he attacks the Hegelian origins of Marx's theory. He regards Hegel's dialectical logic, which has an undeniably holistic character, to be merely a "source of confusion" (ibid: 43)¹⁷⁹. Correspondingly, he regards those parts of Marx inspired by Hegel's dialectic to be "near-nonsense" (ibid: 4). That is to say, Elster effectively takes Marx to be using two quite distinct methods: a holist method that is inspired by Hegel, and an individualist method, inspired by Marx's genuinely scientific interests.¹⁸⁰ While the former must be discarded, Elster holds, the latter should be further explicated, and developed.

If Elster is correct that Marx had two completely antithetical methodologies even in the same work, we should conclude that Marx had indeed a quite schizophrenic mind. I do not think this is an interpretive approach that we should take on. It is true that Marx

¹⁷⁹ Cf. the following passage: "Hegel, in the *Science of Logic*, derived the various ontological categories from each other according to certain deductive principles which have resisted analysis to this day. The connection is neither that of cause to effect, nor that of axiom to theorem, nor finally that of given fact to its condition of possibility. The "self-determination of concept" appears to be nothing more than a loose *ex post* pattern imposed by Hegel on various phenomena that he found important" (ibid: 37-8).

¹⁸⁰ It is worth mentioning that individualism here does not have any (explicitly) ethical or evaluative connotations; it does not mean egoism. "Methodological individualism is a doctrine about how social phenomena are to be explained, not about how they should be evaluated." (ibid:8). See also (Popper: 1945)

occasionally explains, say, the behavior of total capital in terms of the aggregate actions of individual capitalists – and Elster is admirably good in explaining these parts of Marx’s theory – but this does not mean that Marx, even in these parts, has an individualistic methodology. Rather, such individualistic arguments are located within Marx’s overall holistic framework of argument, and therefore presuppose holism. As we will see, for Marx, the laws and regularities of capital exist independently of individuals, but they are *activated* through individuals. Marx’s *dialectical* conception of individuals and social structure – a conception that regards the social structure to be solely constituted through the action of individuals, yet at the very same time to have a life of its own – allows ample room for individualistic explanations. However, as important as Marx’s individualistic explanations are, they always have a subordinate significance to the holism that frames his entire argument.¹⁸¹ In this point, Marx is greatly influenced by Hegel, and it is appropriate to re-examine Hegel in this context¹⁸².

1-2- The Primacy of the Totality and the Subordinate Importance of Mechanical Causality for Hegel

For Hegel, Elster’s two methodological principles, i.e. individualism and the primacy of causal explanations, are only adequate for explaining mechanical wholes. The characteristic feature of mechanical wholes, such as a watch, is that the individuals that constitute it are self-standing by themselves. (The various parts of a watch can be produced in various places, and then assembled to make the watch in yet another place).

¹⁸¹ For a helpful (and polemical) criticism of Elster, See (Mandel: 1989)

¹⁸² See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of causality in Hegel’s logic, and Chapter 5 for a more elaborate discussion of the relation of causality and necessity in Hegel.

As the parts of a mechanical whole are self-subsistent, the relation of causality that obtains between them is also mechanical; that is to say, cause and effect in mechanical wholes are quite distinct from each other. (A wheel that moves another wheel in the watch.)

However, for Hegel, mechanical wholes are not true wholes. The true wholes for Hegel are *organic* wholes, which include living organisms and human societies. In contrast to mechanical wholes, organic wholes are *self*-organizing, *self*-maintaining, and *self*-reproducing. In organic wholes, the individuals that constitute it are so interwoven that they cannot exist independently of one another. (A heart and a lung cannot exist independently from each other, unless they are dead.) Within the framework of the organic wholes, thus, the cause and the effect are not really distinct from each other, but they are *moments* of the whole, which in fact causes *itself*. As we learned in the previous chapter in detail, Hegel considers such a true whole, which has a *sui generis* character, as “substance”. (Note that it is not by accident that Elster’s example, namely the black box with its cogs and wheels, is an example of a mechanical whole, which he then applies to human society.)

Hegel calls mechanical causality “finite” or “real” causality. The defect of finite causality, according to Hegel, is that the chain of cause and effect would continue to an infinite regress, and thus mechanical causality is not able to produce a *self*-organizing, *self*-maintaining whole. Mechanical causality, therefore, has to occur within a “substance”, that is to say, within a framework that structures it. In Hegel’s words, it is the effective “power” of substance that organizes mechanical causality into a unity – mechanical causality, on its own, is “impotent” to produce the desired unity. In the same

way that Hegel considers mechanical causality as finite, he regards substance as the infinite cause. And in the same way that for Hegel the finite and the infinite are not separable from each other and the infinite is nothing but the process which bestows unity on the finite, substance for Hegel is not a spiritual entity lying beyond or behind the chain of cause and effect; rather, substance is the very structure that organizes the chain of cause and effect into a living individual.

Thus, for Hegel, substance is constituted through two moments: (1) the *horizontal* causality of the finite over each other, (2) the *vertical* causality of substance, i.e. infinite cause, over the horizontal causality. Each individual is determined *horizontally* by another finite cause, yet at the same time, it is determined by the *vertical* causality of the infinite cause that gives the individual the specific place that it has in the chain of horizontal causality.

1-3- The Primacy of the Totality and the Subordinate Importance of Mechanical Causality for Marx: The Case of Competition

Hegel's conception of mechanical causality – the conception, according to which mechanical causality between individuals is not self-sufficient, and therefore has to be subordinated to the structure of the whole – underpins Marx's analysis of capitalism. It is not my intention here to discuss Marx's conception of causality in any detail.¹⁸³ What I want to do is to *illustrate* Marx's conception of causality through one prominent example, namely, in his analysis of competition.

¹⁸³ For a very helpful discussion, See Zeleny (1980: 71-88)

Classical political economy is based on an anthropological conception that regards human being as a being primarily defined by the pursuit of self-interest. In this conception, the principal mode of interaction between individuals is competition. Competition is conceived as *the* organizing principle of the economic order, which consequently makes the science of political economy possible. In the words of John Stuart Mill,

Only through the principle of competition has political economy any pretension to the character of a science. So far as rents, profits, wages, prices, are determined by competition, laws may be assigned for them. Assume competition to be their exclusive regulator, and principles of broad generality and scientific precision may be laid down, according to which they will be regulated (*Principles of Political Economy*, Book II, Chapter 4, par. 2).

It is through competition that Adam Smith explains the law of supply and demand, and it is equally through competition that David Ricardo explains how the rate of profit of various capitals becomes equal across society¹⁸⁴. However, although competition plays such a pivotal role in classical political economy, it is never theoretically explained. Rather, competition is simply *presupposed* as a brute fact about human nature, which therefore does not require any explanation in economy. “The free competition”, Marx thus writes,

has never *yet been* developed by the economists, no matter how much they prattle about it, and [no matter] how much it is the basis of the entirety of bourgeois production, production resting on capital. (*MEW* 42:327, *G* 414)

Marx does not deny the role of competition in capitalism. Indeed, as for classical political economy, for Marx competition is a *necessary* requirement for the sphere of economy to

¹⁸⁴ For a helpful discussion of the conception of competition in classical political economy, see Jessop (2010)

be lawful. Indeed, the entirety of *Capital* is written with the assumption of the perfect competition in the market. What Marx denies, however, is the *primacy* of competition in (explanation of) capitalism – and this makes his project not simply a continuation of the tradition of political economy, but the *critique* of political economy. In the context of his exposition of the concept of relative surplus value – the surplus value that a certain capitalist makes through increasing the productivity of labor relative to other capitalists – Marx remarks:

While it is not our intention here to consider the way in which the immanent laws of capitalist production manifest themselves in the external movement of the individual capitals, assert themselves as the coercive laws of competition, and therefore enter into the consciousness of the individual capitalist as the motives which drive him forward, this much is clear: a scientific analysis of competition is possible only if we can grasp the inner nature of capital, just as the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies are intelligible only to someone who is acquainted with their actual motions, which are not perceptible to the senses. (*MEW* 23:335, *C I*:433)

As is clear in this passage, for Marx explaining competition is predicated to explaining capital as the totality (“the inner nature of capital”), *not* vice versa. That is to say, *first*, the totality of capital has to be scientifically developed, and only *then* it is possible to explain competition between individual capitalists. Marx writes,

Conceptually, competition is nothing other than the inner *nature of capital*, its essential character, appearing in and realized as the reciprocal interaction of many capitals with each one another, the inner necessity as external necessity. (Capital exists and can only exist as many capitals, and its self-determination therefore appears as their reciprocal interaction with one another.) (*MEW* 42:327, *G* 414)

That competition for Marx has to be *derived* from the totality of capital means that competition is not a natural, and therefore, immutable fact about human nature, but is

obtained in and through capitalism. In the quoted passage from *Capital*, the order of explanation in Marx is clear: the inner nature of capital requires competition between individuals, and this requirement of capital, then, forms the motives and beliefs of individuals. (Note that this order of explanation is exactly the opposite of what Elster suggests.)

Marx quite frequently uses the term “illusion” [Schein] to refer to competition. (The title of Chapter 50 of *Capital: Volume Three* is “The illusion of Competition”.) The self-sufficiency and freedom of individuals in competition is an illusion, properly speaking, since such freedom only functions as a moment of the totality of capital. The free competition between individuals, therefore, solely contributes to the subjugation of individuals under the rule of capital. “The domination of capital is the presupposition of free competition, just as the despotism of the Roman Caesars was the presupposition of the free Roman ‘private law’” (*MEW* 42:551, *G* 651), Marx writes. Therefore, “it is not individuals who are set free by competition; it is rather capital, which is set free.” (*MEW* 42:550, *G* 650)

I have explained in the first chapter in detail that for Marx as well as for Hegel illusion is not a simple cognitive failure, but it is a *necessary* illusion, which has an inner connection with the totality of essence (of capitalism). The same holds true for competition. Although competition is an illusion, namely an illusion that originates from the surface appearance of capitalism, it is constitutive of capitalism. In what, then, does the necessity of competition in capitalism lie? In classical political economy, competition is conceived as the *cause* of regularities in capitalism, as the *cause* of, say, the law of supply and demand, or as the *cause* of the law of equalization of profit. Marx does not

deny the causal significance of competition; yet he, quite like Hegel, transforms the *mechanical* causality of competition into *substantial* causality of capital over itself, that is, the substantial causality that integrates the said mechanical causality in itself as its own moment. Marx writes,

Competition generally, this essential locomotive force of the bourgeois economy, does not establish its laws, but is rather their executor. Unlimited competition is therefore not the presupposition for the truth of economic laws, but rather the consequence – the form of appearance in which their necessity realizes itself [...]. Competition, therefore, does not *explain* these laws; rather it lets them be *seen*, but does not produce them (*MEW* 42:457, *G* 552).¹⁸⁵

This is a complex passage, which indicates Marx's debt to Hegel's conception of causality. We must note, *firstly*, that competition for Marx on its own is not explanatory; it is rather the laws and regularities of capital, which explain competition¹⁸⁶. Yet, at the same time, *secondly*, the laws and regularities of capital necessarily require competition; since it is only through competition that these laws and regularities can be *activated*. In Marx's words, competition is the "consequence" [Folge] of capital, yet at the same time, competition is the "essential locomotive force" [wesentliche Lokomotor] of capital. To refer to Hegel, we must grasp that the *horizontal* causality of individuals over each other in competition is not explanatory on its own; it becomes explanatory only when it is

¹⁸⁵ "Die Konkurrenz überhaupt, dieser wesentliche Lokomotor der bürgerlichen Ökonomie, etabliert nicht ihre Gesetze, sondern ist deren Exekutor. Illimited competition [*sic*] ist darum nicht die Voraussetzung für die Wahrheit der ökonomischen Gesetze, sondern die Folge — die Erscheinungsform, worin sich ihre Notwendigkeit realisiert. Die Konkurrenz *erklärt* daher nicht diese Gesetze; sondern sie läßt sie *sehn*, produziert sie aber nicht."

¹⁸⁶ Also: "Competition merely *expresses* as real; posits as an external necessity, that which lies within the nature of capital. [Was in der Natur des Kapitals liegt, *wird* nur reel herausgesetzt als äußere Notwendigkeit durch die Konkurrenz.] Competition is nothing more than the way in which the many capitals force the inherent determinants of capital upon one another and upon themselves." (*MEW* 42:551, *G* 651)

integrated into, and functions as a moment of, the *vertical* causality of the totality of capital over individuals. Marx frequently refers to the vertical causality of totality of capital over individuals as “the coercive laws of competition” [Zwangsgesetze der Konkurrenz], the laws that coerce individuals, on pain of perishing, to compete with each other.

For Hegel the “finite” or “real” causality – i.e. the horizontal causality – is what can be seen on the surface of the phenomenon, and the “infinite” causality – i.e. the vertical causality – is the “ideal” side that organizes the real side. The ideal side is not visible, and can only be grasped through conceptual development. Similarly, for Marx, the causality of competition is that which appears to the agents in capitalism, but the inner nature of capital, through which competition can be grasped, can only be explained through scientific analysis.

Further details of Marx’s theory of competition are not important in the current context. What is important is the radical shift that Marx implements in methodology. Whereas classical (and neoclassical) political economy begins from individuals and analyses the aggregate pattern of the behavior of individuals, for Marx the whole has always ontological and explanatory primacy. To put in Hegel’s language, whereas classical political economy is based on the logic of being, Marx’s method is based on the logic of essence. A main task of the logic of essence is to show that the self-subsistence of individuals is merely an illusion. Similarly, Marx’s *critique* of political economy consists in showing that the individualism, with which the classical political economy operates, is an illusion. By distorting Marx’s method, I believe, Elster effectively ignores

the specific nature of Marx's *critique* of political economy, thereby rejecting Marx's revolution in political economy.

If Marx's method is holistic, as I have argued, how does Marx, then, explain the whole? In mechanical sciences, the usual method of scientific explanation is analytic/synthetic. *First*, a totality is *disaggregated* into its constitutive parts. The parts, then, are studied independently of each other, and of the whole (analysis). *Thereafter*, the totality is *re-aggregated* from its constitutive parts to show how the parts interact with each other within the totality (synthesis). This method is appropriate for understanding mechanical wholes, since in mechanical wholes (such as a watch), the parts are self-subsistent, independently of the whole. However, this analytic/synthetic method is not adequate for explaining the true wholes. One cannot dismember an organism, and wish to study the organism in its totality, namely, when it is alive. Similarly, one cannot pluck out individuals from social totality to examine their behavior in isolation, and then add up the individuals to construct the totality, as individuals are *already* constituted through society. Marx's solution, then, to explain the true wholes is radically different from analytic/synthetic method that is used in mechanical sciences. His method, to use a term from Jindrich Zeleny, is "structural-genetic". Marx's method is structural, since it analyses the totality or the structure in which individuals stand, rather than analyzing the behavior of individuals. Marx's method is genetic, since it does not attempt to grasp the totality in one single stroke – it is not intellectual intuition – rather, it *conceptually* develops the totality from its less concrete to more concrete determinations. In mechanical sciences, the phase of analysis is distinct from, and precedes the phase of synthesis. By contrast, Marx's structural-genetic analysis is *at the same time* analytic and

synthetic. Marx's method is analytic, since the analysis makes manifest what is already implicitly contained in the concept of totality. Marx's method at the same time is synthetic, since his exposition does not merely repeat the same data about totality – it is not tautological – rather, it explains the totality in an increasingly determinate way. (See (Zeleny 1980:111-2.) Marx's debt to Hegel's dialectical derivation of the concept of totality is obvious.¹⁸⁷ In Chapter Three, I have explained in detail Hegel's dialectical derivation and exposition of the concept of totality. The most determinate form of totality for Hegel is "actuality" which has a sui generis character. In the current chapter in Section 2, I will explain in detail how Marx derives the totality of capitalist mode of production through his structural-genetic analysis. The totality of capitalist mode of production for Marx is "capital", which, similar to Hegel, is sui generis. As I will show throughout this section, Hegel's influence on Marx is more profound than just a general influence on the methodological conception. I will continue the chapter in Section 3 with a discussion of the absolute power of the totality of capital over individuals. For Marx, the totality of capital coerces individuals, on pain of perishing, to follow the logic of totality. I will also show how for Marx, quite like Hegel, the power of totality is impersonal and non-volitional. This chapter presupposes my discussion of Hegel in Chapter 3; however, it is understandable on its own.

¹⁸⁷ In the end of the logic, Hegel discusses his methodology, and writes, "this progression [of the concept of totality] is just as much *analytic* (in that the immanent dialectic only posits what is contained in the immediate concept) as *synthetic* (since in this concept this difference was not yet posited)." (*EnzL*§239)

2- The Totality of Capital

2-1- Exchange as “Objective Mediation”

As we have learned previously, Hegel in the logic of essence develops an ontology that is absolutely relational. In this ontology, objects are not self-standing on their own, but they are solely defined in relation to each other. That is, objects are for Hegel what they are in and through a system of total mediation that obtains between them. Hegel’s ontology of absolute relationality accords to the social structure of capitalism. For Marx, what makes capitalism a system of absolute relationality, namely a system of absolute sociality, is the relation of “exchange” between the products of labor. Marx designates the relation of exchange as “objective mediation” [gegenständliche Vermittlung] (*MEW* 42:105, *G* 172). “Objective mediation” does not occur through thinking, but is present *in* the structure of commodities in capitalism.

However, what makes capitalism, in contradistinction with previous societies, a system of absolute relationality is not the mere presence of exchange of commodities. Rather, the absolute relationality in capitalism obtains through *universalization* of the relation of exchange. In those pre-capitalist societies, where there was some sort of exchange of commodities, exchange remained a marginal phenomenon. The products were produced primarily for individual consumption, and only the *excess* or the *surplus* would get exchanged. By contrast, in capitalism, where the relation of exchange has become universal, the products of labor are produced *primarily* for exchange, and consumption always occurs by means of the mediation of exchange. To put it in a philosophical language, in pre-capitalist societies, the products of labor are not relationally (that is, in relation to other products of labor) defined. They become

relational only *ex post facto*, only if they get exchanged. By contrast, in capitalism, where a system of absolute relationality is formed, commodities are *ex ante* relationally defined; they become what they are only through relation with other commodities. According to Marx, the universalization of relations of exchange in capitalism implies,

(1) that my product is a product only insofar as it is for others [für andre]; hence sublated individuality, universality (2) that it is a product for me only insofar as it has been alienated [entaußert], become for others; (3) that it is for the other only insofar as he himself alienates his product, which already implies (4) that production is not an end in itself for me, but a means. (MEW 42:127, G196)

When the relations of exchange are universalized, the alienation of my product is simultaneously accompanied by the alienation of the other's product. That is to say, in a system of universal exchange any commodity is originally defined not in terms of its own (it is not *für es*); but in terms of its *relation* to others (it is *für andere*). In the same way that for Hegel relations precede individuals, for Marx, "appropriation through and by means of divestiture and alienation is the fundamental pre-condition" of the formation of commodities in capitalism (MEW 42:126, G 196).

2-2- Circulation as the "First Totality"

Marx very clearly distinguishes "circulation" [Zirkulation] from "exchange" [Austausch]. When relations of exchange get universalized, a closed system or *totality* gets constructed, in whose construction *all* commodities participate, and *no* product of labor remains outside it. Marx names this system the sphere of "circulation". According to Marx,

To get circulation, two things are required above all: Firstly, the precondition that commodities are prices; Secondly, not isolated acts of exchange, but a *circle* of exchange, a *totality* of the same, in constant flux, proceeding more or less over the

entire surface of society; a *system* of acts of exchange. [Nicht einzelne Austauschakte, sondern ein *Umkreis* von Austauschen, eine *Totalität* derselben, in beständigem Flusse und mehr oder minder auf der *ganzen* Oberfläche der Gesellschaft vorgehend; ein *System* von Tauschakten.] (MEW 42:119, G 188, my emphases)

There has been exchange of products of labor and services in the pre-capitalist societies, (in the form of, say, “barter”, “feudal services” etc), but exchange per se does not produce circulation (ibid). It is only when exchange gets ubiquitous that *all* commodities become strictly interrelated and produce the sphere of circulation. The universalization of relations of exchange, on its part, can only occur through formation of one single commodity, i.e. money, that serves as the *universal equivalent* to all commodities, such that the value of each new commodity that is produced gets determined through its relation to the universal equivalent. (It is for this reason that Marx in the above passage asserts that the precondition of circulation is that all commodities be prices. Price in this context is “the expression of the value of a commodity in...money-commodity.” (MEW 23: 110, C I:189)). In the *Contribution to Political Economy* Marx writes,

The continuing processes of the interrelations of commodities [die prozessierenden Beziehungen der Waren aufeinander] crystallize into distinct determinations of the universal equivalent, and thus the exchange process becomes at the same time the process of formation of money. This process as a whole, which comprises several processes, constitutes *circulation*. (MEW 13: 37, MECW 29:292)

The analogy of the sphere of circulation as a totality to Hegel’s “substance” seems evident. (We will learn later that the totality of capitalist mode of production is crucially *more* than the sphere of circulation, but for now, let us hold to circulation.) I would like now to emphasize three main points of similarity: (1) For Hegel substance as totality

inheres in all individual entities and constitutes them. For Marx, commodities are values, only insofar as they are “crystals of the common substance” (*MEW* 23:52, *C* I:128). This common substance is human-labor, but only insofar as it is mediated by and defined through the sphere of circulation¹⁸⁸. The value of a commodity for Marx is not determined by the time of its individual production, but by virtue of the “socially necessary labor time” for its production. This means that the value of a commodity for Marx is determined not in isolation, but only in relation to the totality of the sphere of circulation. (2) For Hegel, substance is not an inert thing, but sustains itself through its constant renewal and reproduction. For Marx, the sphere of circulation is not a pre-given inert totality, but is “a process, a fluid whole of purchases and sales” [ein Prozess, ein flüssiges Ganze von Käufen und Verkäufen] (*MEW* 42:126, *G* 196). That is, for Marx the dynamism of circulation is the prerequisite of its very identity. (3) For Hegel, substance obtains by the interaction of individuals; nonetheless, it paradoxically retains its independent existence, despite the individuals. For Marx, the interaction of individuals produces the sphere of circulation, which is independent from the individuals, and exerts absolute power over them. I will elaborately discuss this third point later in the chapter.

2-3- Capital as the True Totality

True that Marx begins with the sphere of circulation, but it is altogether wrong to magnify circulation to the exclusion of the sphere of production. Indeed, Marx asserts

¹⁸⁸ Note that, for Marx, the human-labor that is value-constituting is “abstract labor”. Abstract labor is that aspect of labor that retroactively obtains through the process of circulation of commodities. The determination of abstract labor in *Capital* is a bone of contention in scholarship on Marx. I am following Michael Heinrich on this issue. See (Heinrich: 1999, S.208ff), and (Heinrich: 1994)

that circulation is only the “first totality [erste Totalität] among economic categories” (*MEW* 42:127, *G* 197). Reconstructing Marx solely with focus on the sphere of circulation would bring Marx too close to the current mainstream economic paradigm with its deification of market¹⁸⁹. We need, therefore, to re-examine Marx’s conception of totality, and see how he develops the totality of capital out of the totality of circulation.

In the Introduction to the *Grundrisse* – a text that has been rightfully dubbed as “Marx’s Discourse on Method” (Carver: 1975) – Marx analytically separates four major spheres within economy: production, distribution, exchange and consumption. According to Marx, “production creates the object which correspond to the given needs; distribution divides them up according to social laws; exchange further parcels out the already divided shares in accord with individual needs; and finally in consumption the product steps outside this social movement and becomes a direct object and servant of individual need, and satisfies it in being consumed” (*MEW* 42:24, *G* 89). Marx then undertakes an exposition of these spheres to demonstrate that they are all tightly interconnected, and each reacts upon others and determines them. In the end of the analysis, he asserts:

The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity. Production predominates not only over itself, in the oppositional definition of production, but over the other moments as well [...]. A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and

¹⁸⁹ This is also a decisive point of difference between Marx and Adorno. Whereas for Marx, as we shall see, the dominating element in economy is clearly the sphere of production, for Adorno – with his exaggerated emphasis on the “principle of exchange”, and pursuing its ramification in culture and in psychology – the sphere of circulation is the determining element. There are some passages in Adorno, which suggest that Adorno is aware of the primacy of production for Marx, but because of his eclectic and unsystematic style of philosophizing, it is difficult to discern what exactly the role of production for him is.

exchange as well as *definite relations between these different moments*. (MEW 42:34, G 99, Marx's emphases)¹⁹⁰

According to Marx, production, distribution, exchange and consumption are “moments” of an “organic whole” [organischen Ganzen] and “mutual interaction” [Wechselwirkung] takes place between them (ibid). This means that distribution, exchange and consumption all have an effect on production and determine it. Yet, despite the close inter-connection of all the four moments, it is *ultimately* the sphere of production that is the “dominating” factor [das Übergreifende], and determines the economy as a whole.

The language that Marx uses is quite unambiguous, and leaves no doubt about the primacy of production for him¹⁹¹. The issue is now *why* production predominates the whole economy and determines other moments. In order to understand the primacy of production for Marx, let me first *simplify* Marx's tetrapartite model of economy: Firstly, the sphere of distribution and exchange closely belong to each other, and together

¹⁹⁰ “Das Resultat, wozu wir gelangen, ist nicht, daß Produktion, Distribution, Austausch Konsumtion identisch sind, sondern daß sie alle Glieder einer Totalität bilden, Unterschiede innerhalb einer Einheit. Die Produktion greift über, sowohl über sich in der gegensätzlichen Bestimmung der Produktion als über die andren Momente.. Eine bestimmte Produktion bestimmt also bestimmte Konsumtion, Distribution, Austausch, die *bestimmten Verhältnisse dieser verschiedenen Momente zueinander*.”

¹⁹¹ Cf. with other places in the same text: (1) (Regarding the relation of production and consumption) “The important thing to emphasize here is only that, whether production and consumption are viewed as the activity of one or of many individuals, they appear in any case as moments of one process, in which production is the real point of departure and hence also the predominant moment.” (MEW 42:29, G 94) (2) (Regarding the relation of production and distribution) “The structure of distribution is completely determined by the structure of production. Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in its object, in that only the results of production can be distributed, but also in its form, in that the specific kind of participation in production determines the specific form of distribution.” (MEW 42:30, G 94) (3) (Regarding the relation of production and exchange) “In so far as *exchange* is merely a moment mediating between production with its production-determined distribution on one side and consumption on the other, but in so far as the latter itself appears as a moment of production, to that extent is exchange obviously also included as a moment within the latter.” (MEW 42:33, G, 99)

constitute the moments of the sphere of circulation. So, we can substitute them with circulation. Secondly, the sphere of consumption, strictly speaking, does not belong to political economy proper, which deals with understanding the economic *laws* and *regularities* governing the movement of modern society. The act of consumption, for Marx, is an *individual* and *isolated* act, through which the product “steps outside the social movement” and gets consumed. True, consumption is a necessary *presupposition* of economy – without consumption there cannot be any production or circulation – but because of the *chaotic* nature of consumption, there cannot be any scientific law explaining it¹⁹². All in all, we can assert that for Marx economy, insofar as its structure and regularity is concerned, is mainly constructed by the two spheres of production and distribution. The task is now to understand why production dominates circulation, and how the two interact with each other. Marx gives (at least) two arguments why production is the determining sphere, what can be called the materialist or physicalist argument (2-3-1), and the economic or theoretical argument (2-3-2). He gives the first argument in his 1857/8 unpublished manuscript, the so-called *Grundrisse*, but he later abandons it in his 1867 *Capital*. The second argument is his pivotal argument, and is developed in both works.

¹⁹² It is exactly for this reason that Marx in the first page of *Capital* bans the study of various use-values from the sphere of political economy, and asserts that the “discovery” of the use-values is a “work of history” [geschichtliche Tat]. “The use-values of commodities”, Marx emphasizes, “provide the material for a special branch of knowledge, namely the commercial knowledge of commodities [Warenkunde]”, which is obviously not political economy (*MEW* 23:50, *C* I:126-7). See also the following passage from his *Results of the Immediate Process of Production*: “To take the use-value first, its particular content, its further determination, was completely irrelevant to the determination of the commodity. The article destined to be a commodity, and hence the incarnation of exchange-value, had to gratify some social want or other, and had therefore to possess some useful qualities. Voila tout [That’s all].” (*Results* p979, *Resultate*:56-7)

2-3-1- The Materialist or Physicalist Argument

According to Marx, in the process of exchange,

The repetition of the process from either of the points, money or commodity, is not posited within the conditions of exchange itself. The act can be repeated only until it is completed, i.e. until the amount of the exchange value is exchanged away. It cannot ignite itself anew through its own resources. *Circulation therefore does not carry within itself the principle of self-renewal. The moments of the latter are presupposed to it*, not posited by it. Commodities constantly have to be thrown into it anew from the outside, like fuel into a fire. Otherwise it flickers out in indifference. (MEW 42:179-80, G: 254, Marx's emphases)

Obviously, circulation cannot produce any products; it can function only insofar as products of labor are produced outside it, and then thrown into it to be circulated. Money, which mediates between commodities in circulation, can only have economic and social significance, Marx asserts, if circulation is related to the sphere of production. Marx concludes,

Circulation, therefore, which appears as that which is immediately present on the surface of bourgeois society, exists only in so far as it is constantly mediated. Looked at in itself, it is the mediation of presupposed extremes. But it does not posit these extremes. Thus, it has to be mediated not only in each of its moments, but as a whole of mediation, as a total process itself. Its immediate being is therefore pure semblance. *It is the phenomenon of a process taking place behind it.* [Ihr unmittelbares Sein ist daher reiner Schein. *Sie ist das Phänomen eines hinter ihr vorgehenden Prozesses.*] (Marx's own emphases, ibid)

Here Marx, using the language of the logic of essence, asserts that circulation *presupposes* production, and this *presupposition* circulation cannot *posit* itself. For Marx, therefore, circulation is not sufficient on its own, and so, "circulation itself returns back into the activity which posits or produces exchange values. It returns into it as its own

ground” (*MEW* 42:180, *G* 255). We can recapitulate Marx’s argument in the following way:

- 1- Circulation cannot produce the commodities between which circulation obtains.
- 2- Therefore, it needs the sphere of production, within which commodities are produced.
- 3- Therefore, production determines (or “predominates”) circulation.

The argument is unconvincing. While Marx is justified in drawing (2) from (1), he is not at all justified to draw (3) from (2). True that circulation necessarily requires production in order to sustain itself, but this does not mean that production predominates circulation. It might well be the case that circulation predominates production, or else neither of the two is predominating. Consider that in contemporary capitalism, there are some major distributive corporations (such as Walmart or Ikea) that determine the process of production (say, in China). The materialist or physicalist reason that circulation requires production does not entitle Marx to draw the conclusion that circulation is *economically* predominated by production.¹⁹³ Perhaps Marx was aware of the insufficiency of the argument that he omitted it in *Capital*.

2-3-2- The Economic or Theoretical Argument

According to Marx, a defining feature of capitalism is constant creation of surplus-value (or profit). In *Capital*, Marx begins his analysis with the sphere of circulation, as a necessary moment of the totality of economy. His aim is to show how production, conceptually, “emerges from the chrysalis” [entpuppt] of circulation (*MEW* 23:170, *C I*:

¹⁹³ See also Harvey (2012:14ff), who offers a similar argument about the inadequacy of the physicalist reading. The example of Walmart is also Harvey’s.

258). The argument is simple and straightforward: “Circulation, or the exchange of commodities creates no surplus value”, for the simple reason that in the sphere of circulation only commodities of the *same value* get exchanged (*MEW* 23:178, *C I*:266). The individual seller might be able to cheat the individual buyer, but such act of cheating is only able to change the *distribution* of value. If we take into account, however, the *totality* of economy, it is evident that circulation, with its principle of exchange of equivalents, cannot produce any surplus-value. According to Marx,

Capital cannot therefore arise from circulation, and it is equally impossible for it to arise apart from circulation. It must have its origin both in circulation and not in circulation. (*MEW* 23: 180, *C I*:268)

Marx calls this state of affair “contradiction in the general formula of capital”. On the one hand, the very existence of capital is dependent on circulation of commodities; if there were no circulation, the products of labor would remain personal, and would not enter into social metabolism. On the other hand, as we have learned, circulation by itself cannot produce surplus value, as in circulation only the equivalents get exchanged. It is out of the scope of this dissertation to explain in detail Marx’s solution to this so-called “contradiction” in the general formula, but the solution briefly is the following: There is *one* specific commodity, which gets exchanged at its full value in the sphere of circulation, but has the capacity to produce more value than what it already embodies. This specific commodity is “labor-power”, Marx asserts, “whose use-value possesses the peculiar property of being a source of value, whose actual consumption is therefore itself an objectification of labor, hence a creation of value” (*MEW* 23:181, *C I*:270). That is to say, labor-power saddles between the sphere of circulation and the sphere of production. Insofar as its exchange value is concerned, it gets exchanged *within* the sphere of

circulation and strictly follows the law of exchange of the equivalents. Insofar as its use-value is concerned, it falls *outside* the sphere of circulation, and within the sphere of production; since use-value of labor-power is production of value itself.

Note how Marx dialectically derives production from the conceptual insufficiencies unveiled in the exposition of circulation. Circulation cannot, on its own, yield surplus value. The inadequacy of the sphere of circulation leads to the derivation of the totality of capital, which is the unity of circulation and production. Although both moments – circulation and production – are constitutive of capital, it is the production that is the pre-dominating moment. For, it is through the sphere of production that surplus value is created. We can now make sense of Marx’s enigmatic phrase, cited earlier, that production, not only predominates circulation, but also it “predominates [...] over itself, in the oppositional definition of production” (*MEW* 42:34, *G* 99). For Marx, production in capitalism is necessarily constituted by two moments: the process of producing use-values (shoes, computers, food, etc), and the process of producing surplus-value (or profit). That production predominates over itself means that in capitalism it is the production of surplus-value that determines the production of use-values. To return to the case of Walmart and Ikea, we can say that, although it is these distributive corporations that might organize the production process, it is the creation of surplus value in the sphere of production that is ultimately the defining feature of economy. We should, therefore, conclude that the reason that production predominates circulation is economical, and is not due to Marx’s so-called materialism.

Marx begins his analysis with the exposition of the sphere of circulation to show that this “first totality” is only a “pure semblance” [reiner Schein] (See the quoted

passage from the *Grundrisse* above). As I have explained in detail in the first chapter, the sphere of circulation, i.e. the market, is that which immediately appears to individuals in capitalism. The principle of the sphere of circulation is exchange of equivalents; it is through circulation that individuals get the idea that they are equal and free. However, the immediate appearance of circulation is a pure semblance, as it hides the sphere of production, which is the locus of exploitation, unfreedom and inequality. Although we cannot directly translate Marx's economic theory into Hegel's logic, it is fair to say that the sphere of circulation accords to Hegel's logic of being, and the transition from circulation to production is akin to the transition from the logic of being to the logic of essence. For Hegel, we have learned previously, essence does not exclude being, but integrates it within its very structure. Similarly for Marx, production does not exclude circulation, but integrates circulation into itself. The essence of capitalism is capital, which is the unity of production and circulation, in such a way that it is ultimately production that is the determining sphere.

2-4- Capital as the Dialectical Unity of Circulation and Production

Marx's conception of capital as the dialectical unity of production and circulation is greatly influenced by Hegel's conception of essence as the dialectical unity of essence and appearance. The *essence* of capital, for Marx, is creation of surplus-value which occurs in the sphere of production. However, the value created in production is of no avail, unless it *appears* in the market. We can summarize the main points of the dialectical conception of essence and appearance in Hegel and in Marx in the following way: (1) For Hegel, "essence *must* appear" (*EnzL.* §131, my emphasis). If essence does

not appear, it ceases to be essence. For Marx, the value created in the sphere of production must be “realized” [verwirklicht] in the market. If the product of labor, which already contains value, cannot be sold on the market, it loses its entire value. (2) For Hegel, essence does not exclude appearance. Essence rather is constituted through the relation of essence and appearance. In other words, appearance functions as a necessary moment of the totality of essence. For Marx, production does not exclude circulation. Rather, capital qua the totality of production is the unity of production and circulation. Thus, circulation functions as a necessary moment of the totality of production.¹⁹⁴ (3) For Hegel, although it is essence that determines appearance, nonetheless, appearance retains some degree of independence, such that it can undergo changes on its own accord. The changes in appearance can potentially react back on essence, and forces essence to re-adjust and re-define itself as essence. The same dynamic conception of the relation of essence and appearance holds for Marx. Although it is production that defines the market or circulation, nonetheless, the market or circulation is not simply, as it were, a slave of production. Rather, the market to some extent remains independent, such that the changes in the market can potentially force production to adjust itself to the demands of the market.¹⁹⁵ (4) For Hegel, there is always the possibility of *mistranslation* between essence and appearance. Something which purportedly was essential, upon its appearing,

¹⁹⁴ This point – that production is constituted through the relation of production to circulation – also explains why Marx uses the term production in two ways, one narrower, the other broader. The narrower conception refers to the sphere of production, while the broader refers to “relations of production” as the unity of production and circulation.

¹⁹⁵ In the first chapter, I explained how for Marx the market (and correspondingly, equality and freedom that obtains through it) is a “semblance” that conceals essence. There is no inconsistency involved here. *If* circulation is regarded as self-standing by itself, or simply as all that there is, it indeed functions as “semblance” [Schein]. But *if* the market is derived *from* the structure of capital, and is accordingly related to the sphere of production in a constitutive way, then circulation functions as the true expression of essence, namely as its appearance [Erscheinung].

might prove to be unessential. The same holds for Marx. A commodity that is produced with a certain value might be sold with a lesser or greater value, or even might lose its entire value if it cannot be sold. The logic of the market, to some degree, reacts back on the sphere of production, and retroactively determines what counts as essential in production.

The dialectical conception of capital as the unity of production and circulation underpins Marx's complex architectonic of presentation in *Capital*. While Marx in the entirety of *Capital* deals with capital as the unity of production and circulation, his emphasis changes. In the first volume, called "the process of production of capital", Marx focuses on production, which is the essence of capitalism. Correspondingly, he presupposes that circulation works smoothly, and therefore there is no value created in production that cannot be realized (sold) in the market. By abstracting from the sphere of circulation, Marx thereby manages to elaborate on issues specifically related to production such as the length of working day, the influence of struggle of workers on the working day, the machinery and technological innovation in production, etc. By contrast, in the second volume, called "the process of circulation of capital", Marx methodologically abstracts from production to elaborate on the appearance of capital in the market. By doing so, he thereby discusses issues related to the sphere of circulation that cannot be discussed in the framework of the first volume, issues such as the effect of circulation time on production or the blockages in circulation that could potentially halt the process of production. Finally, it is in the third volume, called "the process of capitalist production as a whole" that Marx discusses capital as the dialectical unity of production and circulation, and develops the concrete issues, such as the tendency of the

general rate of profit to fall, that can only be explained on the basis of addressing capital in its totality.¹⁹⁶

For Hegel, we have learned, the dialectic of essence and appearance is insufficient; since the two totalities of essence and appearance, although interrelated, remain ultimately distinct from each other, and the relation between them cannot be adequately determined. In Hegel's logic, the category that follows the dialectic of essence and appearance is "actuality". Actuality is a *unity* of the determining (essence) and the determined (appearance). In other words, actuality has the ability to determine *itself*, and by doing so, be determinate. Thus, actuality for Hegel has a *self*-referential character. Hegel writes,

Actuality is the unity of essence and existence [Existenz], of inner and outer, that has immediately come to be. The expression [Äußerung] of the actual is the actual itself, so that in the expression it remains something equally essential and is something essential only insofar as it is in immediate external existence. (*EnzL*. §142)

¹⁹⁶ In the beginning of the third volume, Marx very clearly lays bare the structure of the book as a whole: "In Volume 1 we investigated the phenomena exhibited by the process of capitalist production, taken by itself, i.e. the immediate production process, in which connection all secondary influences external to this process were left out of account. But this immediate production process does not exhaust the life cycle of capital. In the world as it actually is, it is supplemented by the process of circulation, and this formed our object of investigation in the second volume. Here we showed, particularly in Part Three, where we considered the circulation process as it mediates the process of social reproduction, that the capitalist production process, taken as a whole, is a unity of the production and circulation processes. It cannot be the purpose of the present, third volume simply to make general reflections on this unity. Our concern is rather to discover and present the concrete forms which grow out of the process of capital's movement considered as a whole. In their actual movement, capitals confront one another in certain concrete forms, and, in relation to these, both the shape capital assumes in the immediate production process and its shape in the process of circulation appear merely as particular moments." (*MEW* 25:33, *C* III:117).

As in actuality the determining and the determined are one and the same, actuality is effectively the *cause of itself*. That is, actuality has a sui generis character, it is able to reproduce and maintain itself. Although Marx does not explicitly refer to Hegel's actuality, as I will show in the following, his account of capital is greatly influenced by Hegel.¹⁹⁷ Indeed Marx solves the problem of unity of two distinct totalities of production and circulation through his conception of the “circuit” [Kreislau] of capital. For Marx, it is precisely the circuit of capital that gives capital a self-referential character, and makes it sui generis. I will discuss the circuit of capital below.

2-5- The Sui Generis Character of Capital: The “Circuit” of Capital

According to Marx, capital takes on the following circuit [Kreislau] ¹⁹⁸:

$$M-C \text{ (MP, and L)} \dots P \dots C'-M'$$

Capitalism, to use a phrase from Piero Sraffa, is a system of “production of commodities by means of commodities”. In the formula above, M stands for the initial money that is advanced. This money is used to purchase two sets of commodities: means of production (MP) and labor-power (L). Through the process of production (P), which involves labor process, a new kind of commodity (C') is produced. As surplus-value is created through the process of production, the new commodity has more value than the value of MP and

¹⁹⁷ See also (Sekine 1984 I:454-5), and (Bell 2009:91), who argue that capital as the unity of production and circulation accords to Hegel's actuality.

¹⁹⁸ The term “circuit” [Kreislau] has to be distinguished from the term “circulation” [Zirkulation]. While the latter refers to the process of buying and selling commodities that are already produced, the former describes the circular motion of capital as a whole. (See Bell 2009:82)

L combined. The value of new commodity is realized, when it is sold on the market, and results in the return of money (M'), which is more than the initial money advanced.

For Marx, capital is this process of “valorization of value” [Verwertung des Wertes]; the value that is initially advanced (in the form of M) gets augmented in the end of the process (in the form of M'). Classical political economy has a *reified* conception of capital; capital for classical political economy is some “stock” of either money or commodities. In contrast, Marx defines capital in a *relational* way. Capital is not money in isolation, or commodities or means of production in isolation, or the activity of production in isolation, but the *movement* that relates all of them together. More precisely, for Marx capital is a “value in process” [prozessierender Wert] (MEW 23: 170, C I: 256) that successively takes on the form of money, production, and commodity. Marx uses the phrase “metamorphoses of capital” [Die Metamorphosen des Kapitals] to explain the transformation of capital: A butterfly changes its form from larva, to chrysalis, to moth, while remaining the same butterfly through its metamorphosis. Similarly, capital for Marx changes its form from money, to production, to commodity, while remaining capital throughout the movement. Importantly, for Marx capital is not a one-time activity of investment and making surplus-value (or profit), but the *incessant* and *infinite* process of re-investing the surplus-value (or profit) already made. Capital, Marx writes,

is constantly changing from one form into the other, without becoming lost in this movement; it thus becomes transformed into an automatic subject. If we pin down the specific forms of appearance assumed in turn by self-valorizing value in the circuit of its life, we reach the following elucidation: capital is money, capital is commodities. In truth, however, value is here the subject of a process in which, while constantly assuming the form in turn of money and commodities, it changes its own magnitude, throws off surplus value from itself considered as original

value, and thus valorizes itself independently. For the movement in the course of which it adds surplus-value is its own movement, its valorization is therefore self-valorization (*MEW* 23:169, *C* I:255).

For Marx, therefore, money, commodities and productive activity are not externally related; rather each functions as a moment of capital, which is “the dominant subject” [das übergreifendes Subjekt] that relates them all. Thus, while (say) money is transformed into commodities, it is in fact capital that transforms itself from one shape to another. While clearly having Hegel in mind, Marx emphasize that capital is

a self-moving substance [sich selbst bewegende Substanz] which passes through a process of its own, and for which commodities and money are both mere forms. But there is more to come: instead of simply representing the relations of commodities, it now enters into a private relationship with itself, as it were. It differentiates itself as original value from itself as surplus-value, just as God the Father differentiates himself from himself as God the Son, although both are of the same age and form, in fact one single person; for only by the surplus-value of £10 does the £100 originally advanced become capital, and as soon as this has happened, as soon as the son has been created and, through the son, the father, their difference vanishes again, and both become one, £110. (*MEW* 23:16, *C* I:256).

It is noteworthy that Marx here is distancing himself from his earlier nominalist positions. While in his youth, Marx regarded concepts to be mere mental abstractions copied from external reality, in his mature period he becomes, in the case of the concept of capital, a conceptual realist; the concept of capital, although being abstract, is real and effective in the world. Marx writes,

Those who consider the autonomization [Verselbständigung] of value as a mere abstraction forget that the movement of industrial capital is this *abstraction in action*. Here value passes through different forms, different movements in which

it is both preserved and increases, is valorized. (*MEW* 24: 109, *C II*:185, my emphasis)

We see clearly that Marx's conception of capital closely echoes Hegel's conception of actuality. While for Hegel, actuality is the "self-moving of form" (*EnzL.* §147) that has the *power* to organize and reorganize itself, for Marx, capital is a "self-moving totality" [sich bewegendes Ganze] (*MEW* 24:106, *C II*:182) that has *power* to repeat and sustain itself. While for Hegel actuality is not a petrified *thing*, and its identity obtains solely through its *motion*, for Marx, capital "can only be grasped as a movement, and not as a static thing" (*MEW* 24: 109, *C II*:185).

For Marx, "continuity is the characteristic feature of capitalist production" (*MEW* 24:106, *C II*:182). Of course, there is some sort of continuity in previous societies (insofar as social life is reproduced in those societies), yet the continuity in capitalism is more intense, and more importantly, has a qualitatively different character. In subsistence economies, the primary goal of production is satisfaction of needs. When the needs are met, the production of goods ceases. By contrast, in capitalism the primary goal of production is valorization of value (or profit making). Since there is neither an end nor a measure to valorization of value, production never stops; it continues ad infinitum. Continuity therefore in capitalism acquires an autonomous character, independently of the fulfillment of needs. From the ontological point of view, it is exactly the continuity of the process of valorization of value that makes capital a unity. It is only *if* different forms of capital – i.e., money, production, and commodity – continuously succeed each other that *at any given time* the different forms could *coexist* with each other. "The coexistence [of different forms of capital] is itself only the result of the succession." [Das Nebeneinander ist selbst nur Resultat des Nacheinander] (*MEW* 24: 107, *C II*:183), Marx

writes.¹⁹⁹ That identity of capital is solely achieved through the continuity of its different moments implies that an interruption in *any* of the moments disrupts the function of capital as a whole. Thus, if commodity that is produced cannot be sold (through, say, lack of effective demand), or if the process of production is interrupted (say, through strike of the workers), or if money is available but the raw materials or means of production cannot be bought (say, through problems in transportation, or through political sanctions), the whole process comes to a halt. This point – that any disruption in any part of the circuit affects the whole circuit – has important implications for Marx’s theory of crises, as well as for anti-capitalist struggles that aim to combat the autonomy of capital. Explication of these implications of course lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The incessant continuity of the circuit of capital gives it a further feature. As capital for Marx is a self-repeating movement, properly speaking, there is no beginning or end to capital. In *Capital Volume II*, Marx elaborately discusses three different circuits of capital, as they appear to agents involved in production: (1) “Money capital”, which begins with money, and ends with more money. The formula is already mentioned above: $M-C \dots P \dots C'-M'$. Money capital is thus money that begets more money. (2) “Productive capital”, which begins with production and ends with production, and has thus the following formula: $P \dots C'—M'—C \dots P$. (3) “Commodity capital” which begins with

¹⁹⁹ A very clear statement is the following: “As a whole, then, the capital is simultaneously present, and spatially coexistent, in its various phases. But each part is constantly passing from one phase or functional form into another, and thus functions in all of them in turn. *The forms are therefore fluid forms, and their simultaneity is mediated by their succession. [Die Formen sind so fließende Formen, deren Gleichzeitigkeit durch ihr Nacheinander vermittelt ist.]* Each form both follows and precedes the others, so that the return of one part of the capital to one form is determined by the return of another part to another form. Each part continuously describes its own course, but it is always another part of capital that finds itself in this form, and these particular circuits simply constitute simultaneous and successive moments of the overall process. (MEW 24:108, CII:184, my emphasis)

commodity impregnated with surplus-value and ends with another commodity, and has the following formula: $C'—M'—C\dots P\dots C'$. We can understand better the three different forms of capital if we consider it from the point of view of the agents involved in the economic process. From the point of view of *financial* capitalist, capital is investing money to draw more money (Circuit 1). From the point of view of *industrial* capitalist, capital is the incessant production of commodities that can be sold on the market (Circuit 2). From the point of view of *commercial* capitalist, capital consists in continuously buying and selling commodities (Circuit 3). *Objectively speaking*, capital is the constant renewal of the whole process that does not have any beginning or end. In fact, Marx writes, “the entire circuit [of capital] is the actual unity of its three forms”(MEW 24:105, C II:181). But *subjectively speaking*, capital may appear to the capitalists (depending on their position) to be money capital, or commodity capital, or productive capital. Marx thus writes,

In a constantly rotating orbit, every point is simultaneously a starting-point and a point of return.... Thus we have seen that not only does every particular circuit (implicitly) presuppose the others, but also that the repetition of the circuit in one form includes the motions which have to take place in the other forms of the circuit. Thus the entire distinction presents itself as merely one of form, a merely subjective distinction that exists only for the observer (MEW 24:105, C 2:180-1).²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Also: “If we take all three forms together, then all the presuppositions of the process appear as its result, as presuppositions produced by the process itself. Each moment appears as a point of departure, of transit, and of return. The total process presents itself as the unity of the process of production and the process of circulation; the production process is the mediator of the circulation process, and vice versa.” (MEW 24:104, C II:180)

2-6- The Point of View of Totality and the Critique of Ideology [Schein]

In Chapter One, I argued that one prominent form of ideology is the confusion of semblance with essence. Ideological thinking arises from everyday consciousness that takes the seeming as self-standing by itself, and in so doing effectively regards the seeming to be all there is. I also argued that ideology is the “interfolding of the true and the false” (Adorno’s phrase). The ideological judgment is factually true, but it becomes one-sided, and therefore, false, when it is considered in relation to the totality of essence. In the current context, the development of the concept of capital – as a totality consisting of the three circuits of commodity capital, money capital and productive capital – offers Marx an opportunity to criticize two prominent instances of ideological thought in classical political economy, that of the mercantilists (2-6-1), and that of the physiocrats. (2-6-2) Here, I do not intend to discuss the function of these ideologies in their historical context, namely, how mercantilism represented the interests of the rising class of merchants, and how physiocracy represented the interests of feudal landlords in the context of emerging capitalism. What I intend to do is to look at Marx’s *scientific* critique of these ideologies at the theoretical level.

2-6-1- The Critique of the Ideology of Mercantilism

The mercantilists believed that the real source of wealth is money, and it is money that procures more money. Mercantilists, according to Marx, were of three types (in increasing order of sophistication). (i) The first group believed that money has the capacity to beget more money without any intermediary ($M \rightarrow M'$), i.e. through interest. (ii) The second group believed that the main source of wealth is trade, that is to say,

through buying cheap and selling dear (M-C-M'). (iii) The third group, which historically came with burgeoning of industry, accepted the necessity of production, yet still believed that it is ultimately money that is the real source of wealth; production is only a means for creation of money.²⁰¹ Marx criticizes the “crude realism” of the first two types, with the simple argument already mentioned, namely that circulation can only change the *distribution* of wealth; it cannot *produce* wealth. For Marx, these two types, which do not see the necessity of the sphere of production for creation of wealth, are ideologies of the purest sort. About the third form, Marx writes,

The formula M-C...P...C'-M', with the result M'= M+m [i.e. surplus value], contains in its form a certain deception [Täuschung]; it bears an illusory character [illusorischen Charakter] that derives from the existence of the advanced and valorized value in its equivalent form, in money. What is emphasized is not the valorization of the value, but the *money form* of this process, the fact that more value in the money form is finally withdrawn from the circulation sphere than was originally advanced to it, i.e. the increase in the mass of gold and silver belonging to the capitalist. (MEW 24:66, C II:140)

It is true, according to Marx, that in capitalism money can beget money through interest,

²⁰¹ In the following passage, Marx regards mercantilism to be of two types, the first type that corresponds to group (i) and (ii) in my exposition, he calls “Monetary System”. The second type which corresponds to the group (iii) in my exposition, he calls “the Mercantile System”: “The Monetary System had understood the autonomy of value only in the form in which it arose from simple circulation – *money*; it therefore made this *abstract form* of wealth into the exclusive object of nations which just then entering into the period in which the *gaining of wealth as such* appeared as the aim of society itself. Then came the Mercantile System, an epoch where industrial capital and hence wage labor arose in manufactures, and developed in antithesis to and at the expense of non-industrial wealth, of feudal landed property. [The Mercantile System] already have faint notions of money as capital, but actually again only in the form of money, of the circulation of *mercantile* capital, of capital which *transforms* itself into *money*. Industrial capital has value for them, even the highest value – as a means, not as wealth itself in its productive process – because it creates mercantile capital and the latter, via circulation, becomes money. (G:327-8)

that trade can procure money, that investment can be profitable, but all these presuppose *capitalist mode of production in its totality*, and that with its specific capital-class relation. That is to say, although the fact that the circuit of money-capital can produce more money is true, nonetheless if this fact is regarded as self-standing, and in isolation from the circuit of capital in its entirety (which includes also productive capital and commodity capital), the very same fact becomes false. Thus, the forgetfulness of the point of view of totality is exactly the source of the ideology of mercantilism with its deification of money. Marx writes,

The illusory character of $M-C \dots P \dots C' - M'$, and the corresponding illusory significance it is given, is there as soon as this form is regarded as the sole form [sobald diese Form als einmalige fixiert wird], not as one that flows and is constantly repeated; i.e. as soon as it is taken not just as *one* of the forms of the circuit, but rather as its *exclusive* form. However, [in truth] it [i.e. this form] itself refers to other forms. (MEW 24:66-7, C II:141-2, my emphasis)

2-6-2- The Critique of the Ideology of Physiocracy

According to the physiocrats, the only source of wealth is agriculture. For them, trade and industry only transfer the value already created in agriculture. Marx criticizes physiocrats, as they did not see that labor in general is the source of value, and restricted productive activities only to agriculture. Yet at the same time, he highly praises them; since,

the physiocrats transferred the inquiry into the origin of surplus value from the sphere of circulation into to the sphere of immediate production, and thereby laid the foundation for the analysis of capitalist production. (*Theories of Surplus Value, Vol. 1*, MEW 26.1:14, MECW 30:354)

However, the physiocrats made the mirror image error of the mercantilists. Whereas the

mercantilists believed that it is circulation alone that is the source of value, the physiocrats believed that it is production alone that is the source of value. (Thus, the formula of physiocracy is P...P'). It is no surprise that they considered solely agriculture to be the source of value, since agriculture is "that branch of production which can be thought of in complete separation from and independently of circulation, of exchange; and which presupposes exchange not between man and man, but only between man and nature" (*MEW* 26.1:19, *MECW* 30:358). Indeed, the physiocrats ascribed the capacity of agriculture to create surplus value to the intrinsic fertility of the soil, and therefore as "a gift of nature" (*MECW* 30:361, *MEW* 26.1:22) (See also Roncaglia 2005:97). That is, by excluding circulation from their analysis, the physiocrats in effect disregarded the *social* character of production. Their economic theory is therefore a *natural* economic theory. It cannot grasp the historical specificity of capitalist mode of production, which is based on the universalization of the relations of exchange. According to Marx, it is true that production is the source of wealth, but if this true fact is regarded in isolation from the process of circulation, it becomes ideological and false. To conclude, for Marx, both mercantilism and physiocracy are ideology, since they *fixate* or *reify* the seeming, and do not see it as a *moment* of total social process.²⁰²

2-7- The Sui Generis Character of Capital: The "Reproduction" of Capital

We have learned that capital has the capacity of self-repetition and self-replacement. We have learned that this makes capital akin to Hegel's actuality. On further reflection,

²⁰² For a helpful discussion of Marx's critique of mercantilism and physiocracy, See Elster (1985:494ff).

however, we need to qualify these claims. The individual capital, on its own, is not able to reproduce itself, as it needs to purchase means of production and consumer goods from other capitals. It also needs to sell its products to other capitals. The individual capitals are therefore all interlinked with each other, and together constitute “total social capital” [das gesellschaftliche Gesamtkapital]. Although the individual capital has some degree of autonomy, its autonomy is eventually dependent on the total social capital. Marx thus writes,

But each individual capital forms only a fraction of the total social capital, a fraction that has acquired independence and been endowed with individual life, so to speak, just as each individual capitalist is no more than an element of the capitalist class. The movement of the social capital is made up of the totality of movements of these autonomous fractions, the turnovers of the individual capitals. Just as the metamorphosis of the individual commodity is but one term in the series of metamorphoses of the commodity world as a whole, of commodity circulation, so the metamorphosis of the individual capital, its turnover, is a single term in the circuit of the social capital. (MEW 24:351-2, C II:437)

In Part III of *Capital Volume II*, Marx undertakes a close analysis of the circulation process of *total social capital*, what he calls the “reproduction” [Reproduktion] of capital. It is in reproduction of capital that the “actuality” of capital in its full sense obtains. The reproduction of capital is therefore the true totality of capital, and regressively provides the bedrock for other determinations discussed so far²⁰³. It is at the level of the total social capital that the sui generis character of capital in its adequate form obtains. We

²⁰³ In *philosophical* works on Marx, the chapter of reproduction of capital is rarely discussed. This is unfortunate, as it is ultimately in reproduction of capital that the unity of capital obtains. In *economic* works on Marx, reproduction of capital is discussed at length, but the dialectical nature of Marx’s conception is usually ignored. It seems that the excessive disciplinary character of the contemporary academia cannot do justice to Marx, who was both a philosopher and an economist.

should note at the outset, however, that the relation of total social capital and individual capitals is by no means harmonious. The laws and regularities of the total social capital obtain by virtue of competition of individual capitals, through which the less profitable capitals are demolished. While the individual capital, therefore, is perishable, the total social capital continues to reproduce itself, so long as capitalism exists.

In the reproduction of capital, Marx's basic question is this: How capitalism, which is an anarchic mode of production, based on private property and private investment of individuals, can reproduce itself in its entirety? In lack of central economic planning, what does ensure the continuous growth of capitalist economy as a whole? (Cf. Mandel 1978:16). In posing this question, Marx's source of inspiration was Francois Quesnay (1694-1774). Quesnay was an economist as well as a physician in the court of Louis XV. As a physician, he took a great interest in William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood. Before Harvey, Galen's theory was predominant for several centuries. For Galen (to simplify), blood is produced in the liver, and is transferred to the heart. The heart, then, distributes the blood to all the organs, which they consume it away. In Galen's view, thus, there is a one-way street from the heart to the organs; there is no return of blood from the organs to the heart. For Harvey, by contrast, the nutrients enter to the blood and are taken away from it, but the blood is not consumed away; rather it moves in a closed circuit in the body. Harvey provided a detailed anatomical description of the heart and the circulatory system as a whole, and showed the precise mechanism of circulation²⁰⁴. In his 1758 *Tableau économique*, Quesnay, inspired by Harvey's

²⁰⁴ For a very helpful discussion of William Harvey's discovery, and how it proved to be revolutionary in the history of sciences, See (Butterfield 1957: Chapter 3, 49-67). See also David Harvey (2013:329-330).

revolutionary discovery, applied the same concept to body politic. He thereby provided an elaborate mechanism²⁰⁵ to show how society as the totality of economy is reproduced through interconnection of its different sectors.²⁰⁶ Quesnay was a physiocrat, who believed that value is created only in agriculture. As we saw, Marx rejected that the source of value is in agriculture alone, yet he embraced Quesnay's holistic way of thought.

In Marx's reproduction schema, Marx methodologically presupposes that the totality of economy in capitalism is a *closed* system. This implies that capitalism has permeated the economy in its entirety; such that no segment of economy is defined by precapitalist (agrarian or otherwise) mode of production. Moreover, Marx presupposes that the state does not interfere in economy, and economy is solely regulated by competition of individual capitals. These two presuppositions enable Marx to carve out the *immanent* logic of the total social capital, namely, how the total social capital is reproduced *on its own*.

The reproduction schemas have been the subject of an intense debate, especially in economic books on Marx. In this space, I dare not enter into this discussion, and will content myself with an extremely brief sketch. Marx divides the total social capital, which consists of individual capitals, into two overarching departments: Department I produces means of production (including machinery, raw materials, energy, infrastructure,

²⁰⁵ For a brief and precise description of Quesnay's model See, (Roncaglia 2006: 97ff.) For Marx's own description and evaluation of Quesnay, See *Theories of Surplus Value, Volume One*, Chapter 6, (MEW 26-1: 282-318, MECW 31:204-240).

²⁰⁶ "It is of course in Quesnay's *Tableau économique* that is found the original picture of the system of production and consumption as a circular process, and it stands in striking contrast to the view presented by modern theory, of a one-way avenue that leads from 'Factors of Production' to 'Consumption goods'." (Sraffa 1972:93, quoted from Harvey (2013:330))

etc.). Department II produces consumer goods for individual consumption of capitalists and workers. Department II, which produces consumer goods, must purchase the means of production it requires from Department I. Also, the capitalists and workers involved in department I must purchase the consumer goods from Department II. In order for economy as a whole to function properly, the two departments should be in *balance* with each other. The required balance has two aspects: (1) *material* aspect: Department I must produce as much as means of production as both departments together require. Similarly, Department II must produce as much as consumer goods that both departments together require. (2) *value* aspect: Since capitalism is not a natural economy in which the products are simply divided in society, but the products have to be *exchanged* with each other, the connection between the two departments is maintained *solely* through the flow of *money* between the two departments. Therefore, there must be some “necessary proportionalities” (Marx’s phrase) or “equilibrium”(in contemporary jargon) in terms of *value* between the two departments (as well as within each department).²⁰⁷

However, since capitalist economy is based on *private* investment of individual capitals, there is absolutely no guarantee that the necessary proportionalities obtain. On the one hand, capitalism is a radically *socialized* economy in the sense that all individual capitals are strictly related to each other. On the other hand, such a socialized economy is maintained by *private* individual capitals, which operate independently of each other. Capitalism, therefore, cannot in principle be socially coordinated. Thus, contrary to Adam Smith, who without any argument simply presupposed that an “invisible hand” regulates the totality of economy for the benefit of all, for Marx the equilibrium can only

²⁰⁷ For a helpful and brief discussions of reproduction schemas, See Harvey (2013:313ff), Heinrich (2005:137ff), Mandel (1978:21ff), Moseley (1998:159ff)

occur exceptionally, that is, by chance:

The fact that the production of commodities is the general form of capitalist production already implies that money plays a role, not just as means of circulation, but also as money capital within the circulation sphere, and gives rise to certain conditions for normal exchange that are peculiar to this mode of production, i.e. conditions for the normal course of reproduction, whether simple or on an expanded scale, which turn into an equal number of conditions for an abnormal course, possibilities of crisis, since, *on the basis of the spontaneous pattern of this production, this balance is itself an accident. [da das Gleichgewicht bei der naturwüchsigen Gestaltung dieser Produktion selbst ein Zufall ist.]* (MEW 24:490-1, C II:570, my emphasis)

Throughout the three volumes of *Capital*, Marx details how capitalist economy necessarily produces imbalances that over time grow, and culminate periodically in a serious blockage in the process of reproduction of capital, the blockage that he calls crisis.

The general mechanism of crises is the tension between constant expansion of the scale of production of value, and its realization in the market.²⁰⁸ These tensions would, in general, result in the crisis of “overproduction” (where commodities produced cannot be sold), or the crisis of “overaccumulation” of capital (where capital cannot find adequate outlets for investment, which results in devaluation of capital) (Cf. Heinrich 2005:79).

Classical and neoclassical political economy attribute the emergence of crises to factors *external* to economy, such as the intervention of the government, or natural scarcity. By

²⁰⁸ See the following helpful passage: “Contradiction in the capitalist mode of production. The workers are important for the market as buyers of commodities. But as sellers of their commodity –labor-power – capitalist society has the tendency to restrict them to their minimum price. Further contradiction: the periods in which capitalist production exerts all its forces regularly show themselves to be periods of overproduction; because the limit to the application of the productive powers is not simply the production of value, but also its realization. However the sale of commodities, the realization of commodity capital, and thus of surplus-value as well, is restricted not by the consumer needs of society in general, but by the consumer needs of a society in which the great majority are always poor and must always remain poor.” (MEW 25:318, C II:391)

contrast, Marx shows that crises are *endemic* to capitalism, and result from the inner logic of capital. In the *Grundrisse*, Marx writes about Ricardo that “he flees from economics to seek refuge in organic chemistry” (*MEW* 42:646, *G*754); as Ricardo explains the crises through decline in the fertility of soil, i.e. naturally.

Marx is adamant that crises, while being destructive for capital, are at the very same time creative for it. He emphasizes, “the violent destruction of capital, [which happens] not by external circumstances [is] a condition of its self-preservation” [Gewaltsame Vernichtung von Kapital, nicht durch ihm äußere Verhältnisse, sondern als Bedingung seiner Selbsterhaltung] (*MEW* 42:642, *G* 749). The crises, through blocking the process of reproduction of capital, disrupt the unity of capital. (For, as we have learned, the unity of capital solely obtains through its reproduction.) However, crises provide the necessary ambience for substantial reorganization of economy, the reorganization that eventually restores the process of valorization of value. (Through crises, the less profitable capitals perish and merge with large capitals, thus yield larger capitals for investment. Moreover, the massive unemployment results in reduction of wages, which in turn increases the rate of profit, and etc.) The unity, however, once restored, tend to produce imbalances on its own, which results in a new set of crises. Marx thus emphasizes, “crises are never more than momentary, violent solutions for the existing contradictions, violent eruptions that re-establish the disturbed balance for the time being”(*MEW* 25:259, *C* III:357). For Marx, therefore, the sui generis character of the totality of capital obtains, *not despite* crises, but *through* crises.²⁰⁹²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ Contrary to the standard readings of Marx, for Marx, the crises of capitalism do not *automatically* result in its collapse. (Therefore, the so-called “Zusammenbruchstheorie” is wrong.) (See Heinrich 2016:182). Crises, of course, result in massive impoverishment of people,

The total social capital is sui generis in two aspects: (1) Capital is able to reproduce itself *economically*. It can re-generate the process of valorization of value, and derivatively, it can reproduce the means of production and consumption. (2) It is able to reproduce itself *socially*. That is to say, it can reproduce the social relation of capital and labor, which is necessary for economic reproduction of capital.²¹¹ Marx writes,

Capitalist production therefore reproduces in the course of its own process the separation between labor-power and the conditions of labor. It thereby reproduces and perpetuates the conditions under which the worker is exploited. It incessantly forces him to sell his labor-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labor-power in order that he may enrich himself. It is no longer a mere accident that capitalist and worker confront each other in the market as buyer and seller. It is the alternating rhythm [Zwickmühle] of the process itself which throws the worker back onto the market again and again as a seller of his labor-power and continually transforms his own product into a means by which another man can purchase him. In reality, the worker belongs to capital *before* he has sold himself to the capitalist. (*MEW* 23:603, *C I*: 723, my emphasis)

In order for capital to be able to sustain itself, there must always be workers who sell their labor-power to capital. This cannot be left to subjective preference of workers, i.e.

but there is no direct link between such impoverishment and revolution. For Marx, as I take him, the crises open up the space for political action; whether the politics ensued is progressive or reactionary depends on the agency of people involved.

²¹⁰ For Hegel, too, the crises are not merely restrictive, but at the same time they can be productive. In his *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel emphasizes the positive role of defect or lack [Mangel] for the life of an organism. Similarly, in the *Philosophy of Right*, he asserts how through lack of crisis, the ethical life can become petrified, and lose its livelihood.

²¹¹ (1) “The capitalist process of production, therefore, seen as a total, connected process, i.e. a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital-relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-laborer. (*MEW* 23:604, *C I*:724) (2) “Does a worker in a cotton factory produce merely cotton textiles? No, he produces capital. He produces values which serve afresh to command his labor and by means of it to create new values.” (“Wage Labor and Capital”, *MEW* 6:410, *MECW* 9:214)

whether the workers are willing to work for capital, but has to be objectively obtained. The process of reproduction of capital ensures that the workers are *coerced* to work for capital, since in the end of each cycle of production, the product of labor is alienated from the workers, leaving no choice for them but to continue to work for capital. To use Hegel's language, capital is *sui generis*, as it is able to posit its own presuppositions. The availability of workers who are forced to work for capital is the *presupposition* of capital, and capital *posits* this very presupposition through its reproduction. As workers exist only as the presupposition of capital, Marx emphasizes that they belong to capital, even *before* they have sold themselves to capital.

Finally, what secures the *sui generis* character of the total social capital is the "law of relative surplus population" in capitalism. (Cf. Bell 2009:105ff) Contrary to Malthus, Marx argues that there is no abstract natural law of population, and capitalism has its own historically specific law of population. No matter what the natural rate of growth of population is, capital always produces a large number of workers superfluous. Marx writes,

If a surplus population of workers is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus population also becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalist accumulation, indeed it becomes a condition for the existence of the capitalist mode of production. It forms a disposable industrial reserve army, which belongs to capital just as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost. (*MEW* 23:661, *C I*: 784)

For Marx, the existence of relative surplus population is (a) a necessary condition for capital. Yet, this necessary condition is at the same time (b) the consequence of the working of capital. (a) The existence of relative surplus population is a necessary *condition* of capital. On the one hand, the existence of a large number of unemployed

people reduces the wages of those employed. This increases the rate of profit of capital, and secures the augmentation of the process of valorization of value. On the other hand, the imbalance in the total social capital, which results in the cyclical periods of stagnation and growth, changes the valorization requirements of capital. The “industrial reserve army” ensures that capital, depending on economic situation, be able to expand or contract the scale of production. (b) The industrial reserve army, being the presupposition of capital, is at the same time the *consequence* of reproduction of the total social capital; since the competition between individual capitals force them to increase the productivity of labor through constantly developing labor-saving machinery, which subsequently throws workers out of their work.

In conclusion, let us recapitulate the discussion in this section. I have argued that the universalization of relations of exchange makes capitalism a totality that has unity. This totality, at first, is conceived as the sphere of circulation. However, on further reflection, it turned out that the sphere of circulation requires the sphere of production, since it is only through production that surplus-value is created. I have argued that Marx has a dialectical conception of the interrelation of the sphere of production and circulation; the two co-determine each other, yet, it is ultimately production that is the determining sphere. I have argued that for Marx circulation and production become united through the “circuit” of capital. For Marx, capital, through its circular motion, becomes *sui generis*, such that it can reproduce and maintain itself. Such a *sui generis* character attains, properly speaking, not at the level of individual capitals, which are ultimately perishable, but at the level of the total social capital. Capital is the cause of itself, since it produces its own requirements, *both* economic requirements *and* social

requirements. Particularly, capital establishes its sui generis character through producing relative surplus population, which provides the necessary milieu for the thriving of capital.

3- The Nature of the Power of the Totality of Capital

I have argued so far that the totality of capital for Marx has a sui generis character. That is, capital has a life of its own, and is able to produce and reproduce itself independently of individuals. This implies that capital has an “absolute power” over individuals who constitute it. Individuals must necessarily do what capital requires them to do; otherwise they perish. In this section, I will discuss the absolute power of the totality capital over individuals, and show how this power is impersonal and non-volitional. This section serves as an illustration of the absolute power of substance over individuals in Hegel’s logic of essence, which I discussed in Chapter Three in detail

3-1- The Absolute Power of the Totality of Capital

Already in his youth, Marx was aware that the totality of society has an autonomous logic, independently of individuals, and that the totality exerts power over individuals. In the *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels write:

This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into a material power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now. The social power, i.e., the multiplied productive force, which arises through the cooperation of different individuals as it is caused by the division of labor, appears to these individuals, since their

cooperation is not voluntary but has come about naturally [nicht freiwillig, sondern naturwüchsig ist], not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant [nicht als ihre eigne, vereinte Macht, sondern als eine fremde, außer ihnen stehende Gewalt, von der sie nicht wissen woher und wohin], which they thus are no longer able to control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the actions of man, nay even being the prime governor of these (*MEW* 3:34, *MECW* 5:47-8).²¹²

Note the dialectical language that Marx and Engels use. The totality of society is produced solely through interaction of individuals (“what we ourselves produce”), yet at the same time it forces individuals to comport themselves according to its logic (“alien force existing outside them”). Marx retains this dialectical conception throughout his career. The main difference is that while in the *German Ideology* he regards the division of labor as the source of formation of totality that exert power over individuals, in his mature writings the division of labor loses its privileged explanatory status. In later writing, as I have discussed, the principle of the formation of totality is exchange of commodities.²¹³ Thus, in the *Grundrisse*, in the context of the exposition of exchange of

²¹² Also in the same work: “How is it that in this process of private interests acquiring independent existence as class interests the personal behavior of the individual is bound to be objectified [sich versachlichen], estranged [sich entfremden], and at the same time exists as a power independent of him and without him, created by intercourse, and is transformed into social relations, into a series of powers which determine and subordinate the individual, and which, therefore, appear in the imagination as “holy” powers?” (*MEW* 3:27, *MECW* 5:245)

²¹³ This shift of perspective is important. The division of labor is not specific to commodity-producing societies. There are societies with an intricate network of division of labor in which there is only a minimal exchange of the products of labor. (Marx gives the example of an ancient Indian village.) In capitalism, according to Marx, the division of labor is guided and determined by the logic of exchange of commodities. As division of labor is determined by the logic of the market, labor in capitalism, according to Marx, acquires an “abstract” character, a character that is absent in pre-capitalist social formations. Thus, in the *Grundrisse*, Marx writes, “Indifference towards any specific kind of labor presupposes a very developed totality of real kinds of labor, of

commodities and the totality of circulation, he writes,

As much, then, as the whole of this movement appears as a social process, and as much as the individual moments of this movement arise from the conscious will and particular purposes of the individuals, so much does the totality of the process appear as an objective interrelation, which arises spontaneously from nature; [sosehr erscheint die Totalität des Prozesses als ein objektiver Zusammenhang, der naturwüchsig entsteht] arising, it is true, from the mutual influence of conscious individuals on one another, but neither located in their consciousness, nor subsumed under them as a whole. Their own collisions with one another produce an *alien* social power standing above them, produce their mutual interaction as a process and power independent of them. Circulation because a totality of the social process is also the first form in which the social relation appears as something independent of the individuals, but not only as, say, in a coin or in exchange value, but extending to the whole of the social movement itself. The social relation of the individuals to one another as a power over the individuals which has become autonomous, whether conceived as natural force, as chance or in whatever other form, is a necessary result of the fact that the point of departure is not the free social individual. Circulation as the first totality among the economic categories is well suited to bring this to light.²¹⁴ (*MEW* 42:127, *G* 196-7).

which no single one is any longer predominant. As a rule, the most general abstractions arise only in the midst of the richest possible concrete development, where one thing appears as common to many, to all. Then it ceases to be thinkable in a particular form alone. On the other side, this abstraction of labor as such is not merely the mental product of a concrete totality of labors. Indifference towards specific labors corresponds to a form of society in which individuals can with ease transfer from one labor to another, and where the specific kind is a matter of chance for them, hence of indifference. Not only the category, labor, but labor in reality has here become the means of creating wealth in general, and has ceased to be organically linked with particular individuals in any specific form.” (*MEW* 42:38, *G* 105)

²¹⁴ “Sosehr nun das Ganze dieser Bewegung als gesellschaftlicher Prozeß erscheint und sosehr die einzelnen Momente dieser Bewegung vom bewußten Willen und besondern Zwecken der Individuen ausgehn, sosehr erscheint die Totalität des Prozesses als ein objektiver Zusammenhang, der naturwüchsig entsteht; zwar aus dem Aufeinanderwirken der bewußten Individuen hervorgeht, aber weder in ihrem Bewußtsein liegt noch als Ganzes unter sie

This passage is most illuminating, especially if we compare it with the neoclassical political economy, which is the foundation of the current mainstream economics. The beginning point for the neoclassical theory is the free individual that has certain needs. Two individuals enter into the relation of exchange with each other, because *before* doing the exchange, they make an estimate of the utility of the outcome *in their mind* and intend to maximize this utility. That is, it is up to the individuals *to enter* or *not to enter* into exchange. Marx does not deny that individuals have certain preferences in exchange of commodities. But he holds that the individuals' particular purposes are always already formed in a framework, in a totality, and there is no escape from that framework. I might be free in deciding *what* kind of commodities I would like to exchange, but I am absolutely unfree with regard to the fact *that* I have to enter into the relation of exchange in a capitalist economy. In the context of the development of the relations of exchange in *Capital*, Marx clearly writes that individuals do what the logic of totality require them to do, even if they are completely unaware of it: "they do it, without being aware of it." [Sie wissen das nicht, aber sie tun es.] (MEW 23:88, C I:166). Thus, whereas for neo-classical theory, exchange is a *contingent* phenomenon, dependent upon the calculations of those who would get involved in exchange, for Marx exchange is a *necessary* social

subsumiert wird. Ihr eignes Aufeinanderstoßen produziert ihnen eine über ihnen stehende, *fremde* gesellschaftliche Macht; ihre Wechselwirkung als von ihnen unabhängigen Prozeß und Gewalt. Die Zirkulation, weil eine Totalität des gesellschaftlichen Prozesses, ist auch die erste Form, worin nicht nur wie etwa in einem Geldstück oder im Tauschwert das gesellschaftliche Verhältnis als etwas von den Individuen Unabhängiges erscheint, sondern das Ganze der gesellschaftlichen Bewegung selbst. Die gesellschaftliche Beziehung der Individuen aufeinander als verselbständigte Macht über den Individuen, werde sie nun vorgestellt als Naturmacht, Zufall oder in sonst beliebiger Form, ist notwendiges Resultat dessen, daß der Ausgangspunkt nicht das freie gesellschaftliche Individuum ist. Die Zirkulation als erste Totalität unter den ökonomischen Kategorien gut, um dies zur Anschauung zu bringen."

phenomenon, which is independent of individuals and objectively mediates between the individuals, who are being coerced to enter into this relation.²¹⁵

It is in this context that we can make sense of Marx's frequent referrals to the economic laws and regularities in capitalism as being "naturwüchsig" (spontaneous or natural), laws and regularities which function as a "Naturmacht" (natural power) over individuals. In *Capital*, Marx even more explicitly states,

In the midst of the accidental and ever-fluctuating exchange relations, the labor time socially necessary to produce them asserts itself like a regulative law of nature [als regelndes Naturgesetz gewaltsam durchsetzt] in the same way that the law of gravity asserts itself when a person's house collapses on top of him (*MEW* 23:89, *C* I:168).

At first sight, Marx's ascription of naturalness of the social relations in capitalism seems to be at odds with the very pivot of his critique of political economy; since, it is the main aim of Marx's critique to show that exactly there is nothing "natural" about capitalism; rather, capitalism is a "historical" product, and for this reason it can be abolished for a more humane society.²¹⁶ The apparent inconsistency can be resolved, when we look again at Marx's critique of the physiocrats. Recall that the physiocrats held that the source of value is not human sociality, but nature. Marx writes:

For them the bourgeois forms of production necessarily appeared as natural forms. It was their great merit that they conceived these forms as physiological forms of

²¹⁵ See Michael Heinrich's critical analysis of neoclassical theory from Marx's standpoint (ibid, 1999, S. 62-78, especially, S.77-78). Also, See (Heinrich: 2005, S.43-4)

²¹⁶ Among the many places that Marx argues against naturalness of capitalism, See the following passage from the *Grundrisse*. The "aim" of bourgeois political economy, Marx writes, "is to present production...as encased in eternal natural laws independent of history, at which opportunity *bourgeois* relations are then quietly smuggled in as the inviolable natural laws on which society in the abstract is founded. This is the more or less conscious purpose of the whole proceeding." (*MEW* 41:22, *G* 87)

society, as forms arising from the natural necessity of production itself, forms that are independent of anyone's will or of politics, etc. They are material laws; the error is only that the material law of a definite historical social stage is conceived as an abstract law governing equally all forms of society (*MEW* 26.1: 12, *MECW* 30:353).

In this passage, Marx praises physiocrats, in that they conceived the laws of society – contrary to social contract theorists – as independent of individuals; yet at the same time he criticizes them, in that they did not see these natural laws as being historical. That is to say, when Marx talks of naturalness of capitalist economy, he does not refer to nature simpliciter, but quite like Hegel, he refers to “second nature which takes the place of the original and purely natural will” (*GPR* §151). The economic laws of capitalism are natural, in the sense that they *unavoidable* and *inescapable*. That the individuals have to enter into relations of exchange is not something that they can choose. Even if they can subjectively distance themselves from the act of exchange and think that they may be capable of not exchanging, they nonetheless must objectively engage in exchange, which functions as a natural law for them.²¹⁷

The unavoidability and inescapability of the totality of capitalism is also expressed in Marx's allusion that such totality functions as a “fate” from which nobody can flee. He writes,

²¹⁷ Marx's contradictory ascription of naturalness to capitalism is well discussed by Adorno through his concept of “Naturgeschichte”. See *Negative Dialektik* (*GS* 6:347-353) especially the following passages: (1) “That the assumption of natural laws is not to be taken a la lettre, least of all to be ontologized ... is confirmed by the strongest motive of Marxist theory of all, that of the potential abolition of these laws” (ibid: 348) (2) “That [economic] law is nature-like due to the character of its inescapability under the dominating relationships of production” (ibid: 348). (3) “The natural lawfulness of society is ideology, to the extent it is hypostatized as an immutable given fact of nature. Natural lawfulness is real however as a law of motion of unconscious society, as it is pursued in *Capital* from the analysis of the commodity-form down to the theory of economic crisis in a phenomenology of the anti-Spirit” (ibid: 349).

Individuals are subsumed under social production; social production exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not subsumed under individuals, manageable by them as their common wealth. [Die Individuen sind unter die gesellschaftliche Produktion subsumiert, die als ein Verhängnis außer ihnen existiert; aber die gesellschaftliche Produktion ist nicht unter die Individuen subsumiert, die sie als ihr gemeinsames Vermögen handhaben] (*MEW* 42:91, *G* 158).²¹⁸

Marx's conception of the totality of capital as "fate" [Verhängnis] closely resembles Hegel's conception of the totality of substance as "fate" [Schicksal], and Adorno's conception of the totality of society as "spell" [Bann], which I have explained in the previous chapter. For Hegel the power of fate is impersonal and non-volitional, and for Marx, as we will see, the same holds true.²¹⁹

It is important, to emphasize, that for Marx totality exerts power over all individuals, obviously over workers, but also over the capitalists. The capitalist, Marx writes,

shares with the miser an absolute drive towards self-enrichment. But what appears in the miser as the mania of an individual is in the capitalist the effect of a social mechanism in which he is merely a cog. Moreover, the development of capitalist production makes it necessary constantly to increase the amount of capital laid out

²¹⁸ Also, Compare with the *German Ideology*: "Or how does it happen that trade, which after all is nothing more than the exchange of products of various individuals and countries, rules the whole world through the relation of supply and demand — a relation which, as an English economist says, hovers over the earth like the fate of the ancients, and with invisible hand allots fortune and misfortune to men, sets up empires and wrecks empires, causes nations to rise and to disappear?" (*MEW* 3:35, *MECW* 5:48) (It is worthwhile to mention that the relation of supply and demand loses its explanatory function in Marx's later writings, but this is besides the point in the current context.)

²¹⁹ In *Capital*, Marx emphasizes that "the silent compulsion of economic relations sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker" (*MEW* 23:765, *C* I:899). Note that the phrase that Marx uses, "the silent compulsion" [der stumme Zwang], clearly echoes Marx's conception of capital as fate.

in a given industrial undertaking, and competition subordinates every individual capitalist to the immanent laws of capitalist production, as external and coercive laws. It compels him to keep extending his capital, so as to preserve it, and he can only extend it by means of progressive accumulation. (*MEW* 23:618, *C* I:739)

The capitalist *must* expand the scale of surplus-value making, Marx asserts, “merely as a means of self-preservation, and on pain of going under.” [bloß als Erhaltungsmittel und bei Strafe des Untergangs] (*MEW* 25:255, *C* III:353). The “coercive laws of competition” do not leave any option for the capitalist but extending the exploitation of the workers. As the capitalists are also equally dominated by the rule of capital, we must conclude that in capitalism the primary mode of domination is not the domination of capitalists over workers, but the domination of the totality of capital over all individuals, over both capitalists and workers.²²⁰

²²⁰ It is worthwhile at this point to evaluate Postone’s influential reading of Marx. Postone is quite right when he claims that “in Marx’s analysis, social domination in capitalism does not, in its most fundamental level, consist in the domination of people by other people, but in the domination of people by abstract social structures that people themselves constitute” (Postone 1990:30). However, Postone is *wrong* insofar as he thinks that the relation of domination of the totality of capital over both capitalists and workers *excludes* the class domination of capitalists over workers. The genetic and dialectical conception of totality in Marx allows him to accommodate class domination within the structure of the domination of the totality over all individuals, and there is no inconsistency involved here. Postone writes, “within the framework of Marx’s analysis, the form of social domination that characterizes capitalism is not ultimately a function of private property, of the ownership by the capitalists of the surplus product and the means of production; rather, it is grounded in the value form of wealth itself, a form of social wealth that confronts living labor (the workers) as a structurally alien and dominant power” (ibid: 30). By excluding class domination from Marx’s analysis, I believe, Postone in effect destroys the political potential of Marxism. Postone consciously and unabashedly distances himself from the history of the class struggle of workers, and from its theoretical expressions in various forms of Marxism. Thus, he uncritically lumps together all different forms of Marxism as “traditional Marxism”, which he defines as “all theoretical approaches that analyze capitalism from the standpoint of labor and characterize that society essentially in terms of class relations, structured by private ownership of the means of production and a market-regulated economy” (ibid: 7). Contrary to Postone, the private ownership of means of production, as well as the class domination that ensues from it, is essential to capitalism. Postone locates himself in the tradition

However, that the capitalist and the workers are both dominated by the social forces that are independent of them does not mean that there is no difference between the domination exerted on the capitalist, and the one exerted on the worker. In the *Results of the Immediate Process of Production*, Marx emphatically avers that “the capitalist is just as enslaved by the relationships of capitalism as is his opposite pole, *albeit in a quite different manner*” (*Results*: 990, *Resultate*: 70, my emphasis). Obviously, it is the capitalists that benefit from the system of total domination, and find “absolute satisfaction” in it, whereas the workers in capitalism are systematically deprived of the necessary material and intellectual resources for self-development.²²¹

3-2- The Impersonal Character of Power in Capitalism

Since his youth, Marx clearly understood that domination in capitalism has an essentially impersonal character. In the *German Ideology* (1846), Marx and Engels write that in capitalism, the individual is bifurcated into “private individual” [persönlichen Individuum] and “class individual” [Klassenindividuum]:

In the course of historical development, and precisely through the fact that within the division of labor social relations inevitably take on an independent existence, there appears a cleavage in the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labor and the conditions pertaining to it In the estate [Stand] (and even more in the tribe) this is as yet concealed: for instance, a nobleman always remains a nobleman, a commoner always a commoner, a quality inseparable from his individuality irrespective of his other relations. The difference between the private individual and the class individual,

of Critical Theory, and it is no surprise that he adopts a similar position as Adorno, for whom, as I have already indicated, the domination of market is the fundamental form of domination.

²²¹ For a very helpful discussion about the difference between the “unfreedom” of the worker from that of the capitalist See (Cohen: 1983)

the contingent nature of the conditions of life for the individual, appears only with the emergence of the class, which is itself a product of the bourgeoisie. (*MEW* 3:76, *MECW* 5:78)

If a capitalist goes bankrupt in capitalism, he ceases to be a capitalist; but a nobleman in feudalism remains a nobleman, even if he becomes poor. In capitalism, the private individual becomes distinct from the economic category that he embodies. However, although the individual in capitalism consists of these two determinations, it is eventually the class individual that determines the private individual, such in the end the personality in general “is conditioned and determined by determinate class relations”. The power of a certain capitalist over a certain worker is not by virtue of his (private) individuality, but only by virtue of him being a capitalist. “The class”, Marx and Engels emphasize, “assumes an independent existence as against the individuals” who constitute it, “so that the latter find their conditions of life pre-determined and have their position in life and hence their personal development assigned to them by their class, thus becoming subsumed under it.” (ibid).

That individuality is suppressed in capitalism, and individuals primarily become the embodiment of social institutions is the basic presupposition of Marx’s later work in *Capital*. In the Preface to the First Edition, he very clearly states that individuals in capitalism are mainly “personification of economic categories”, “the bearers of particular class relations” and thus, qua individuals they do not even bear responsibility for their action:

To prevent possible misunderstandings, let me say this. I do not by any means depict the capitalist and the landowner in rosy colors. But individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers of particular class-relations and interests. My standpoint, from which

the development of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he remains, socially speaking, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them (*MEW* 23: 16, *C I*:92).

This point – that individuals are only bearers of their social position – gives social relations in capitalism an *abstract* and *formal* character. While in the *German Ideology*, Marx regards the cause of such abstraction to be the division of labor, in his later work, he leaves no doubt that such abstraction is the result of the universalization of the relation of exchange. In the second chapter of *Capital*, he states that in capitalism the individuals are primarily appendages to commodities, the “guardians of commodities” [Warenhüter]. He writes,

Here the persons exist for one another merely as representatives and hence owners, of commodities.... In general, the characters who appear on the economic stage [ökonomische Charaktermaske] are merely personifications of economic relations; it is as the bearers of these economic relations that they come into contact with each other. (*MEW* 23:100, *C I*: 178-9)²²²

There is an important distinction between exchange of commodities in pre-capitalist societies, and in capitalism. In pre-capitalist societies, when there is exchange – and

²²² Also the following illuminating passage from the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*: “The commodity owners entered the sphere of circulation merely as guardians of commodities. Within this sphere they confront one another in the antithetical roles of buyer and seller, one personifying a sugar-loaf [i.e. a particular commodity], the other personifying gold [i.e. money]. Just as the sugar-loaf becomes gold, so the seller becomes a buyer. These distinctive social characters are, therefore, by no means due to human individuality as such, but to the exchange relations of persons who produce their goods in the specific form of commodities. So little does the relation of buyer and seller represent a purely individual relationship that they enter into it only in so far as their individual labor is negated, that is to say, turned into money as *non-individual* labor. It is therefore as absurd to regard buyer and seller, these bourgeois economic types, as eternal social forms of human individuality, as it is preposterous to weep over them as signifying the abolition of individuality. They are an essential expression of individuality arising at a particular stage of the social process of production.” (*MEW* 13:76, *MECW* 29:331)

exchange is a marginal phenomenon in these societies – it is usually in the form of direct barter: a commodity is exchanged with another commodity. In capitalism, in contrast, exchange is necessarily being made by means of money: *first* a commodity gets sold, thereby is transformed into money; and *only then*, the money thus obtained can buy another commodity. Direct barter is compatible with the social structure, which is based on personal relationship. Those who are involved in direct barter do the exchange *at the same time and in the same geographical location*. But once the process is mediated by money, the money that is obtained through selling of the first commodity can be used in *different time and location*. (The money obtained, say, in New York City this year can be used, say, in a distant village in Iran next year.) Marx writes,

Circulation bursts through all the temporal, spatial and personal barriers imposed by the direct exchange of products, and it does this by splitting up the direct identity present here between the exchange of one's own product and the acquisition of someone else's into the two antithetical segments of sale and purchase. (*MEW* 23:127, *C I*:209)²²³

Because every commodity of whatever sort has to be first transformed into money in order to get exchanged, money serves as the universal equivalent, which “extinguishes every qualitative difference between commodities.” Money, therefore, serves as a “radical leveler”, which makes all commodities qualitatively identical (*MEW* 23: 146, *C I*:229). In capitalism, therefore, “all relations transform into money-relations: taxes in kind into money taxes, rent in kind into money rent, military service into mercenary troops, all personal services in general into money services, and patriarchal, slave, serf,

²²³ Also: “When money enters into exchange, I am forced to exchange my product in exchange value in general or for the general capacity to exchange, hence my product becomes dependent on the state of general commerce and is torn out of its local, natural and individual boundaries.” (*MEW* 42:84, *G* 150)

and guild labor into pure wage labor” (*MEW* 42:81, *G*:146).

In the pre-capitalist modes of production, the social production and reproduction was maintained through *personal* relationship of domination and dependence: between serfs and lords, between slaves and masters, between women and men, between apprentices and masters etc. In capitalism, as the social metabolism is essentially mediated through money, the personal relation of domination would fade away, or become only second rank in terms of importance. The domination in capitalism is “objective” in the sense that it is independent of *any* individual, and therefore, Marx says, “abstract”:

These *objective* dependency relations also appear, in antithesis to those of *personal* dependence (the objective dependency relation is nothing more than social relations which have become independent and now enter into opposition to the seemingly independent individuals; i.e. the reciprocal relations of production separated from and autonomous of individuals) in such a way that individuals are now ruled by *abstractions*, whereas earlier they depended on one another. (*MEW* 42:97, *G* 164)

In capitalism, social domination is always mediated by the relations of exchange. In a *purely* capitalist society, for Marx, domination based on nature would fade away (say, the domination of men over women would fade away). The relations of exchange are sufficient unto themselves to produce dependency, and hence domination. Marx writes, “the exchange of commodities in and for itself requires no other relations of dependence than those which result from its own nature”. (*MEW* 23:182, *C* I:271). In pre-capitalist societies, it is the power of community [*Gemeinwesen*] that pastes people together; in capitalism, money, as a universal being [*gemeines Wesen*] which annihilates all distinctions, “is itself the *community* [*Gemeinwesen*], and can tolerate none other

standing above it.” (*MEW* 42:149, *G* 223). Money, that is, is a social substance that inheres in all commodities (and through commodities, in their guardians), and determines them. The power of people over people in capitalism is not an immediate power, originated from some natural relation of dependence, but it is essentially *mediated* and *generated* through money-relations. In the previous chapter, we learned that for Hegel even the power of one individual over another individual is the manifestation of the power of the totality of substance. Similarly, according to Marx, “the power which each individual exercises over the activity of others or over social wealth in general exists in him as the owner of *exchange-values*, of *money*. The individual carries his social power, as well as his bond with society, in his pocket” (*MEW* 42:90, *G* 157). Money is the result of action of *all* individuals; so the power that one individual exerts over another individual through money is in fact the power of social substance, which is manifested in the relation between the two said individuals.

3-3- The Non-Volitional Character of Power of the Totality of Capital

I have argued that for Marx capital is a self-organizing, self-maintaining, and self-reproducing social totality. My question is now this: Does the fact that capital has a structure of self imply that capital, precisely speaking, is a “subject”? That is to say, is capital an “agent”, which has a free will? I have already quoted passages, where Marx uses the language of “subject” to describe capital: Capital, Marx writes, is a “predominant subject”, or an “automatic subject”, or the “subject of the process” of valorization of value.²²⁴

²²⁴ In other parts of *Capital*, too, there are passages that seem to indicate that Marx believed that

However, I do not think these quotes establish that capital for Marx has agency. True that capital has a structure of self, but this does not mean that capital is a subject in its full sense. The main interpretive key is when Marx refers to capital as an “automatic subject” [automatisches Subjekt]. The hallmark of true subjectivity is freedom. There cannot be any talk of freedom for capital, since capital is *solely* defined in terms of the necessity of the activity of the valorization of value. By definition, capital cannot but valorize itself, and for this reason capital is an automaton. (A sewing machine sews. It cannot but sew.) To put in Hegelian concepts, capital is determined by a law (i.e. valorization of value), which remains *external* to it. In this precise sense of external limitation, capital must be considered as *finite* (in Hegel’s sense); since a true infinity, which is an attribute of subjectivity for Hegel, is not externally limited. The subject for Hegel, of course, is law-governed, but the law is not simply *given* to it; it is rather *posited* and *assimilated* by the subject as subject’s own law. Moreover, subjectivity for Hegel is essentially tied up with *purposiveness*, which is integral to freedom. Precisely speaking, valorization of value is not the *purpose* of capital, but its “determining motive” [bestimmendes Motiv] (*MEW* 24:351, *C* II:427) or its “driving motive” [treibendes Motiv] (*MEW* 24: 360, *C* II:436). We should thus grasp then that the selfhood of capital consists in the fact that it is a unity that is able to maintain and reproduce itself, however,

capital has agency. For example, in the context of the discussion of the working day, Marx writes, “capital takes no account of the health and the length of life of the worker, unless society forces it to do so. Its answer to the outcry about the physical and mental degradation, the premature death, the torture of over-work is this: Should that pain trouble us, since it increases our pleasure (profit)?” (*MEW* 23:285, *C* I:381), and: “Capital is dead labor, which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks.” (*MEW* 23:247 *C* I:342). I hold that in these passages Marx uses the language of agency not literally, but metaphorically.

this selfhood does not amount to subjectivity. Thus, to use Hegel's words, capital is a "substance", but it is emphatically *not* Geist or the Concept.²²⁵

In Chapter 3, I argued how for Hegel the power of the totality of substance over individuals is non-volitional. I also argued that the non-volitional power of substance is *always* mediated by the volitional power of individuals over each other. That is to say, in the social ontology based on the logic of essence, the power of individuals over each other is in fact the power of the social slots that they occupy. The social slots are, so to speak, inert, and the power that comes from them is thus non-volitional. However, the social slots, in order to be effective, must be *activated* by real individuals who have

²²⁵ Therefore Tony Smith's and Moishe Postone's interpretations, which regard capital as the Concept or Geist are wrong: (1) Tony Smith's: "When Marx uses the Hegelian terminology of 'subject' and 'self-moving substance' to refer to capital he is claiming that the logic of capital instantiates Hegel's logic of the Concept: capital as a universal *distinct* from its moments, while being simultaneously *continuous* and *identical* with these moments, which together constitute capital's process of self-valorization [...]. The homology between Hegel's logic of the Concept and the logic of capital appears exact and complete. Marx's claim, in brief, is that capital must be comprehended as an absolute 'Subject' in the Hegelian sense of the term." (Smith 2014: 23-4) (2) Moishe Postone's: "Marx describes his concept of capital in terms that clearly relate it to Hegel's concept of *Geist*...[He] explicitly characterizes capital as the self-moving substance which is Subject. In so doing, Marx suggests that a historical Subject in the Hegelian sense does indeed exist in capitalism, yet he does not identify it with any social grouping such as the proletariat, or the humanity. Rather, Marx analyses it in terms of the structure of social relations constituted by forms of objectifying practice and grasped by the category of capital (and, hence, value). His analysis suggests that the social relations that characterize capitalism are of a very peculiar sort – they possess the attributes that Hegel accorded the *Geist*. It is in this sense, then, that a historical Subject as conceived by Hegel exists in capitalism" (Postone, *ibid*: 75). However, Postone's account is more nuanced (and obviously contradictory), since two page later he asserts, "as the Subject, capital is a remarkable 'subject'. Whereas Hegel's Subject is ... knowing, in Marx's analysis, it is ... blind. Capital, as a structure constituted by determinate forms of practice, may in turn be constitutive of forms of social practice and subjectivity; yet, as the Subject, it has no ego. It is self-reflexive and, as a social form, may induce self-consciousness, but unlike Hegel's Geist it does not possess self-consciousness" (*ibid*: 77). Postone's contradictory formulations can be easily resolved, if we take capital to be according to Hegel's "substance" (which does not have self-consciousness) and not to Hegel's Geist or the Concept (which does have self-consciousness). Not only capital does not have any self-consciousness, but also – contrary to Postone – it does not have any sort of agency in the full sense of the term.

consciousness and will. Exactly the same structure – the structure in which the power is primarily non-volitional, but must necessarily be mediated by the volitional power of individuals – holds for Marx. In *Capital*, in the context of the relation of individuals and commodity, Marx writes,

Commodities cannot go themselves to market and perform exchange in their own right. We must therefore, have recourse to their guardians, who are the possessors of commodities. Commodities are things, and therefore lack the power to resist man [widerstandslos gegen den Menschen] [...]. In order that these objects may enter into relation with each other as commodities, their guardians must place themselves into relation to one another as persons whose will reside in those objects. (*MEW* 23:99, *C I*:178)

In interpreting this passage, we must first note that for Marx commodity is not a natural thing. It is rather a social institution (obtaining through exchange) specific to capitalist mode of production. Although the social institution of commodity exerts absolute power over individuals – individuals *must* present their products of labor in commodity-form – nonetheless; the power of commodity over individuals is always mediated by the action of individuals in exchange. Similarly, later on in the book, in the context of the action of the capitalists, Marx defines the capitalists as “personification of capital” [personifiziertes Kapital]; as “capital endowed with consciousness and a will” [mit Willen und Bewußtsein begabten Kapitals] (*MEW* 23:618-9 *C I*:739). He unequivocally writes, when surplus-value needs to be divided into capital (for reinvestment) and revenue (for the individual consumption of the capitalist), “it is the owner of the surplus-value, the capitalist, who makes this division. It is an act of his will” [Wer aber diese Teilung vornimmt, das ist der Eigentümer des Mehrwerts, der Kapitalist. Sie ist also sein Willensakt] (*MEW* 23:618, *C I*:738). We must conclude, then, that for Marx, the power

of the totality of capital over individuals is abstract and non-volitional, yet the same power becomes actual and effective *only* through the action of real individuals who exercise their volition.

Chapter 5: The Necessity of Power

Hegel came forward with the hitherto quite unheard-of propositions that the contingent has a ground because it is contingent, and just as much also has no ground because it is contingent; that the contingent is necessary, that necessity determines itself as contingency, and, on the other hand, this contingency is rather absolute necessity. [Pre-Darwinian] natural science has simply ignored these propositions as paradoxical trifling, as self-contradictory nonsense, and, as regards theory, has persisted on the one hand in the barrenness of thought of Wolffian metaphysics, according to which a thing is *either* contingent *or* necessary, but not both at once; or, on the other hand, in the hardly less thoughtless mechanical determinism which in words denies contingency in general only to recognize it in practice in each particular case. (Friedrich Engels, *Dialectic of Nature*, MEW 20:489, MECW 25:500-1)

1- The Historicity of Hegel's Conception of Necessity and Contingency

Hegel's claim in the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right* that philosophy is "its own time comprehended in thought" [ihre Zeit in Gedanken erfaßt] does not only hold true for Hegel's social and political philosophy, but for all areas of his philosophy. In case of the *Science of Logic*, where the subject matter of the book is "pure thought" as such regardless of its empirical manifestation, the claim of historicity of philosophy is more

difficult to prove, or even to make sense of. Yet, in this dissertation I have endeavored to show that the very categories of Hegel's logic, specifically those of the logic of essence, express the general structure of society in a specific historical period, namely capitalism. In this chapter, one of my aims is to show that Hegel's conception of necessity and contingency in the logic of essence is not an ahistorical conception of these modal categories, but one, which expresses the specific form that necessity and contingency take on in the modern capitalist world.

A good point of departure is to consider Ian Hacking's argument in his *The Taming of Chance* (1990, especially Chapter 1). Hacking argues that the gradual erosion of deterministic laws of causality in late 19th and 20th century in the natural sciences goes hand in hand with the development of statistical thinking in society, and correspondingly, the management of society through statistics (in health, insurance, population, etc.) In the natural sciences, instead of strict causal laws that *exclude* chance and contingency altogether, a new conception of natural law becomes prominent that is based on probability, thereby obtaining *through* chance and contingency. In a parallel way, in society statistical laws are being discovered that, in contrast to causal laws, do not determine the behavior of *each* particular individual, nonetheless express the law-like trends and tendencies in society as a whole. The systematic emergence of chance in the natural sciences and in society, according to Hacking, does not mean that laws have become any *less* necessary. To the contrary: "The world became not more chancy, but far less so" (ibid: 10). Quantum physics accepts that nature is at bottom stochastic, but this has paradoxically extensively enhanced human being's ability in prediction of the necessary course of nature (ibid: 2). Similarly, it is only through acceptance of chance in

the behavior of individuals that the strict management of society as a whole has become possible. Social laws have a statistical character, yet they are equally inexorable (ibid: 2).

According to Hacking, in the realm of philosophy, it was Charles Sanders Peirce that first forcefully argued for the existence of chance in nature (1892). For Peirce, Hacking argues, the laws of nature do not obtain despite chance, but they “evolve out of random processes.” Therefore, for Peirce, “chance was no longer the essence of lawlessness, but at the core of all laws of nature.” (Hacking ibid:xii, Chapter 23) Perhaps because of the impenetrability of Hegel’s logic or perhaps because Hegel had an ill repute according to which he is a wildly idealist philosopher that endeavors to derive *all* phenomena without exception from conceptual thought, Hacking does not recognize Hegel as an important precursor. Nonetheless, as we will learn in this chapter, there is an ineliminable role for contingency in Hegel’s system, and that the necessary for Hegel solely obtains through contingency. My aim is not to compare Hegel with Peirce. There are important differences between the two, which need to be discussed in a separate essay. Rather, I aim to carve out the exact dialectical interrelation between necessity and contingency in Hegel’s logic, and to show how for Hegel the “power of necessity” [Macht der Notwendigkeit] (*EnzL* §151) determines the contingent phenomena (Sections 2, 3, 4). I will also show how Hegel’s conception of necessity and contingency accords to Marx’s analysis of the structure of society in capitalism. For Marx, the necessary economic laws of capitalism do not occur despite the vagaries of the market, but precisely through them (Section 5). Finally, I discuss the shape of freedom of individuals in the logic of essence and in capitalism. I will show how this freedom is not a freedom of self-determination, but a kind of freedom that solely obtains through contingency and

randomness (Section 6). This chapter presupposes my discussion in Chapter 3, where I show how the “totality” for Hegel is “substance” that determines – and exerts “absolute power” on – individuals as “accidents”. Nonetheless, the discussion in this chapter is self-standing, and can be understood on its own.

2- The Preliminaries to Hegel’s Modal Ontology

2-1- The Reality of Contingency

The first point that needs to be settled is that for Hegel contingency is real. Dieter Henrich has already persuasively argued for this point (1971), and I do not want to repeat his arguments here. I just want to draw attention to the significance of Hegel’s thought through contrasting it with Spinoza. According to Spinoza,

In nature there exists nothing contingent, but all things have been determined by the necessity of divine nature to exist and operate in a certain way. (E1p29)

Because we are fundamentally finite beings, Spinoza believes, “the order of causes” of a thing sometimes “escapes us”, and because of this ignorance, “we” call that thing contingent; but the thing in reality is thoroughly and necessarily determined (E1p33sch1). Contingency therefore for Spinoza results from our epistemic failure. It is not real in the world. Quite consistent with Spinoza on this point, Laplace in 1795 writes,

Given for one instant an intelligence which could comprehend all the forces by which nature is animated and the respective situation of the beings who compose it – an intelligence sufficiently vast to submit these data to analysis – it would embrace in the same formula the movement of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the lightest atoms; for it, nothing would be uncertain and the future

as the past, would present to its eyes. (1951:3, Quoted from Hacking *ibid*:11-12)²²⁶

In contrast to Spinoza and Laplace²²⁷, Hegel is quite clear that contingency is real. It is hard to miss the acerbic tone of Hegel in the following passage, where he criticizes those who deny the reality of contingency in the world:

Contingency is to be accorded its due even in the objective [gegenständlich] world, since it is a form of the idea in general. This holds first for nature on the surface of which contingency has, so to speak, its free sway which should also be recognized then as such, without the pretension (at times erroneously ascribed to philosophy) of intending to find in it an instance of being able to be only so and not otherwise... Even in relation to the spirit and its activity, one has to guard against letting the well-intentioned endeavor of rational knowledge mislead one into purporting to demonstrate to be necessary or, as one is accustomed to say, to construe as a priori, appearances that possess the character of contingency.... It is quite right that the task of science and, more precisely of philosophy in general, consists in knowing the necessity hidden beneath the semblance of contingency. Yet this should not be so understood as if the contingent pertained merely to our subjective representation and that, therefore, it must be completely set aside in order to arrive at the truth. Scientific endeavors that single-mindedly pursue this direction will not escape from the fair-minded reproach of vacuously playing around and being obstinately pedantic. (*EnzL* §145Z)

²²⁶ Note that Laplace was one of the first who developed a theory of probabilities and statistics. (The passage quoted is from his *Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*.) Nonetheless, he did not believe that probability is something real. Rather it only results from the limitedness of our cognitive faculty.

²²⁷ It is also interesting to observe that even a philosopher as skeptic as Hume, who lived in an era of predominance of determinism, accepts determinism in the constructive phase of his philosophy. So, he writes, "It is universally allowed that nothing exists without a cause of its existence, and that chance, when strictly examined, is a mere negative word, and means not any real power which has anywhere a being in nature" (2007[1748]:69), quoted from Hacking (*ibid*:13)).

This passage contains several important points to which I will return in the rest of the chapter. For now, I would like to emphasize the obvious point that Hegel is a philosopher of necessity, and regards the task of philosophy to explain the necessary principles governing the world. For this reason, although he totally grants that there *are* contingent things and events in the world, nonetheless, he requires philosophy to conceptualize the *necessity of contingency*. True that the specific contingent phenomena are not scientifically or philosophically theorizable, but philosophy has to theorize contingency as such, and show its necessity in the objective structure of the world. In Henrich's precise formulation, for Hegel, "contingency, but not the contingent is necessary [der Zufall, nicht das Zufällige sei notwendig], therefore, the particular contingent is not an object of substantial [philosophical] interest." (1971:168).

2-2- The Centrality of Actuality

Hegel's discussion of modal ontology in the *Science of Logic*, judged even by the standards of Hegel's logic, is most complex. It is easy to lose sight of what he is doing, while observing the back and forth dialectical transformation of actuality, necessity, possibility, contingency into each other. One pivotal point that helps us to keep our orientation is the centrality of "actuality" [Wirklichkeit] to Hegel's modal ontology. Indeed, the discussion of modal categories occurs in the context of Hegel's discussion of "actuality" (the third and final part of the logic of essence), and in the second chapter of that part, entitled again as "actuality". To be more specific, in the logic the modal categories emerge as the attempt to adequately conceptualize "actuality" fails. As we recall, "actuality" for Hegel is not to be confused with mere facticity, or mere reality.

Such mere facticity belongs to the realm of the logic of being, where reality is described – uncritically – as it is. In the logic of essence, by contrast, actuality is described in relation to what is essential. Now those things or events in actuality that can simply be replaced with other things or events, without affecting the actual, are the “contingent”. In contrast, those things or events in the actual that cannot be changed – otherwise the actual would lose its actuality – are the “necessary”. To give an example, the dress code of the workers of Walmart as an economic institution is “contingent”; the dress code can change without having any effect on the economic function of Walmart. In contrast, the exploitation of the workers, and the drive to maximize profit is “necessary” for Walmart. Walmart would not be Walmart – it loses its “actuality” – if it did not exploit the workers.

Indeed, the centrality of actuality to Hegel’s modal ontology in the logic is in accordance with the overall centrality of actuality to his philosophy in general. This is one important reason why generations of Marxist thinkers were attracted to Hegel’s philosophy. Adorno, who could not hide both his fascination and frustration with Hegel, called Hegel’s philosophy “theodicy of actuality” [Theodizee des Wirklichen] (*GS* 7:116) or the “theodicy of this world” [Theodizee des Diesseits] (*GS* 6:300). Lukács considered Hegel’s logic as “*the* ontology, which is true to the actuality” of modernity (*GLW* 13:497). The Marxists were fascinated with Hegel’s philosophy of actuality; since on the one hand, they were opposed to the wishful thinking of liberal philosophy, which is in the business of constructing the world as it *should* be; and on the other hand, they were opposed to the positivism of conservative thought, which accepted the status quo, without seeing the immanent “possibility” in actuality that would allow actuality to be changed for better. In case of modal categories, Hegel’s emphasis on the centrality of actuality testifies how he

transforms the transhistorical ontology of early modern period to his own historical ontology. Whereas in the early modern period, it is “necessity” that forms the centerpiece of ontology – the model of philosophy in this period is mathematics and geometry – for Hegel the world as is actually made through history gets the upper hand.²²⁸²²⁹

Now, let us look at how Hegel conceives of necessity and contingency in relation to actuality. Here is the definition of contingency in the logic:

The contingent is an actual that at the same time is determined as merely possible, whose other or opposite equally is. This actuality is therefore mere being or existence, but posited in its truth as having the value of a positedness or of possibility. (*WdL* II:205, *SL* 545)

The contingent is “merely possible” (as opposed to the “really possible”) in the sense that although it is, it can equally not be; it can be changed without imposing any change on actuality. In a similar vein, Hegel defines necessity. First, he provides a usual definition of necessity – “*what is necessary cannot be otherwise*” (*WdL* II:211, *SL* 549) – but then he develops the concept of necessity in relation to actuality:

²²⁸ There is a tension in Hegel’s conception of modal categories: although he regards actuality to be the centerpiece of philosophy, nonetheless, he regards philosophy to be primarily related to necessity. Hegel resolves this dialectical tension through conceiving necessity in terms of actuality, as we will see in a moment.

²²⁹ Cf. Lukács’ account: “Das drückt sich schon darin aus, daß er [i.e. Hegel] die Wirklichkeit als Zentrum dieses Gebietes [der Modalitätskategorien] auffaßt. Denn es ist klar, daß sowohl erkenntnistheoretisch wie logisch die Notwendigkeit den Gipfelpunkt der modalen Betrachtungsweise bilden muss, während für jede echte Ontologie die Wirklichkeit jene Totalität ist, welcher alle modale Bestimmungen, die Notwendigkeit mit inbegriffen, untergeordnet werden müssen. Natürlich meinen wir dabei eine diesseitige, weltimmanente Ontologie, keine theologische oder kryptotheologische. Denn in diesen wird in erster Linie das Universum als von einer absoluten Notwendigkeit beherrscht behandelt; das inappellable Geradesosein der Wirklichkeit, ihre vielleicht wichtigste immanent ontologische Bestimmung, wird dadurch zu einer bloßen Erscheinungsweise, wenn nicht zu einem Schein, hinter welchem dann, in den verschiedenen Theologien in verschiedener Weise, die absolute Notwendigkeit, die Absicht, der Wille Gottes etc. durch Offenbarung und aus ihr abgeleitete Erkenntnis sichtbar werden soll.” (*GLW* 13:544)

The *developed* actuality as the alternation of the inner and the outer collapsing into one, the alternation of its opposite movements that are united into *one* movement, is *necessity*. [Die *entwickelte* Wirklichkeit, als der in eins fallende Wechsel des Inneren und Äußeren, der Wechsel ihrer entgegengesetzten Bewegungen, die zu *einer* Bewegung vereint sind, ist die *Notwendigkeit*.] (*EnzL.* §147)

According to Hegel, actuality indeed has to be conceived as the “activity” [Tätigkeit], as the “self-movement of form” [Sichbewegen der Form], as the “activation of what matters” [Betätigung der Sache], which “translates itself from the inner into outer, and from outer into inner” [Sichübersetzen des Inneren ins Äußere und des Äußeren ins Innere] (*EnzL.* §147). For Hegel, the *process* of actuality as obtaining through the relation of what is necessary in actuality (i.e. the inner) and what is contingent in actuality (i.e. the outer) is the necessary itself. There is no possibility that such a process constituting actuality could be otherwise, and for this reason, it is necessary. In the *Science of Logic*, he writes,

This actuality, *which is itself as such necessary*, for it contains necessity as its *in-itself*, is *absolute actuality* – actuality which can no longer be otherwise, for its *in-itself* is not possibility, but necessity itself. (*WdL* II:213, *SL* 550)

Thus, Hegel by defining necessity as the process of actuality that is able to maintain itself in its changing states, in effect unites “actuality” and “necessity”. As we will see later, this is most manifest in the highest form of necessity for Hegel, i.e. the “absolute necessity”, which is explicitly defined as “rejoining” [Zusammengehen] of actuality with itself. Hegel writes, “that which is simply necessary only *is*, because it *is*.” [Das schlechthin Notwendige *ist* nur, weil es *ist*.] (*WdL* II:215, *SL* 533).

2-3- The Broad Conception of Necessity

It is important to note that Hegel has a much more expansive notion of necessity than our usual conception of necessity. We might tend – under the influence of mechanistic sciences or perhaps Kantian (but not necessarily Kant’s) philosophy – to restrict necessity to causality: what is necessary is that which is *causally* determined. However, as Lenin in his notes on the *Science of Logic* observes,

When one reads Hegel on causality, it appears strange at first glance that he dwells so relatively lightly on this theme, beloved of the Kantians. Why? Because, indeed, for him causality is only *one* of the determinations of universal connection, which he had already covered earlier, in his *entire* exposition, much more deeply and all-sidedly; *always* and from the very outset emphasizing this connection, the reciprocal transitions, etc. (1961 [1916]:162)

For Hegel, Lenin explains, “cause and effect...are merely moments of universal reciprocal dependence, of (universal) connection, of the reciprocal concatenation of events, merely links in the chain of the development of matter”. For this reason, “the all-sidedness and all-embracing character of the interconnection of the world” can be expressed by causality, Lenin emphasizes, only “one-sidedly”, “fragmentarily” and “incompletely” (ibid). Lenin’s observation is indeed true. If we look only at the logic of essence, we readily see that Hegel explains the inter-relation of things and phenomena, in addition to cause and effect, in terms of the relation of ground and grounded, condition and conditioned, law and appearance, inner and outer, force and expression, interaction, etc. Causality for Hegel is important, but only as *a* relation among other relations, not as *the* overarching category or as *the* category that strictly excludes other forms of relationality. Hegel especially warns to use the category of causality in explanation of Spiritual phenomenon and events; the necessity involved in the realm of Spirit is so rich

that transcends any strictly causal laws:

It has become a common jest in history to let *great effects arise from small causes* and to cite as the primary cause [erste Ursache] of a comprehensive and profound event an *anecdote*. Such a so-called cause is to be regarded as nothing more than an *occasion* [Veranlassung], an *external stimulus* [äußere Erregung] of which the *inner spirit* of the event had no need, or could have used a countless host of other such in order to begin from them in the sphere of appearance, to disengage itself and give itself manifestation. (*WdL* II:228, *SL* 562)

The highest category of the logic of essence is “substance” which Hegel, as we will see later, identifies with “absolute necessity”. Absolute necessity is the *totality* of necessary relations that obtain in actuality, and cannot therefore be reduced to mere causality.²³⁰ Thus, from a Hegelian point of view, it is thoroughly insufficient to say that the chain of the revolutions in the Arab world in 2011 was *caused* by the self-immolation of a street-vendor, Mohammad Bouazizi, in Tunisia; but one has to say that the internal structure or the totality – “substance” – of the Arab countries through constellation of factors and relations (high unemployment rate, corruption, political dictatorship, etc) became rife with instability such that it only needed a trigger to explode. The primacy is not with the trigger, but with the totality that posits the contingent trigger as contingent. In Hegel’s words, “such a petty and contingent circumstance is the occasion of the event *only* because the latter has *determined* it to be such.” (*WdL* II:228, *SL* 562) To conclude, causality does not exhaust necessity for Hegel, but is only a moment of necessity.

²³⁰ “To the same degree that the Understanding is accustomed to resisting [the idea of] substantiality, it is, by contrast, at home with causality, i.e. the relationship of cause and effect. If construing a content in a necessary fashion is what matters, then reflection at the level of the Understanding makes it its business to reduce that content to the relationship of causality above all. Now this relationship, to be sure, pertains to necessity, but it is only the one side in the process of necessity which is just as much this, to sublimate the mediation contained in causality and demonstrate itself to be a simple relation-to-itself [i.e. substance]” (*EnzL*. §153Z)

3- Hegel's Materialist Critique of the Cosmological Proof of the Existence of God

In the previous section, I argued (1) that for Hegel contingency is real, (2) that necessity and contingency are defined in relation to actuality, and that the necessary is the process of actuality constituting itself as actuality, (3) that Hegel's necessity is broader than one that obtains through causality. In this section, I will focus on Hegel's critique of the cosmological proof of the existence of God that precisely deals with the dialectic of necessity and contingency, as it pertains to actuality. The shift from the logic to the proofs of existence of God might be surprising; yet there is no surprise in case of Hegel, as the two are closely interrelated. In the Summer 1829, Hegel offered two courses, one on the logic, and the other on the proofs of existence of God (Jaeschke 2003:497). In the first meeting of the latter, he announced that his lectures are intended to "supplement" the lectures on the logic "not in content, but in form", and "this doctrine [i.e. the proofs], insofar as it is scientific, and the sphere of logic do not fall outside each other" (*WW* 17:347, *LPEG*:37). Indeed, insofar as the "*nature of proof*" is concerned, the two come close to each other; since both involve attending to the *transitions* from less determinate categories to more determinate ones. (In case of the proofs of the existence of God, the issue is precisely how to make the *transition*, say, from contingency to necessity (the cosmological proof), or from thought to being (the ontological proof)). (Cf. Höhle 1998:189ff, Albrecht 1958) However, that Hegel puts much emphasis on the proofs of the existence of God does not mean that he simply accepts the traditional theology. Rather, as Marx was astutely aware in his dissertation, Hegel by re-interpreting the proofs of existence of God in effect dismantles them. Marx writes,

Hegel has turned this theological demonstration entirely around, that is, he

degrades them in order to justify them [umgedreht, d.h. verworfen, um sie zu rechtfertigen]. What kind of clients are those whom the defending lawyer can only save from conviction by killing them himself? (*MEW* 40:370, *MECW* 1:130)

In order to understand how this “justification by means of degradation” works in the case of Hegel’s critique of the cosmological proof, we need first to reconstruct Hegel’s argument. We have learned that for Hegel necessity is more expansive than causality. Here is the initial definition of necessity in the *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*:

The necessity of an existing thing requires that it stand in connections [Zusammenhänge] with other things such that, in all aspects, it is completely determined by other existing things that function as conditions and causes. It cannot be separated from them or come into being on its own, nor can there be any condition, cause, or circumstance of connection by means of which it could be so separated (*WW* 17: 453, *LPEG*:105, underline mine).

That which is necessary, according to Hegel, is *completely* determined through its relation with other things. The necessary things, Hegel emphasizes, are *totally* embedded in a network of “*connections* of conditions, ...dependencies, connections of *cause* and *effect*, *rule-governedness* of their inner and outer course of actions, *laws*” (*WW* 17: 449, *LPEG*: 102). Now, as Hegel defines necessity in terms of relation, expectedly he also defines contingency in terms of that which *falls out* of this network of relationality. A thing is “contingent”, Hegel writes,

in virtue of its isolation [Vereinzelung]; whether it exists or not does not disturb or alter other things; the fact that it is so little held by them, and that any hold it derives from them is wholly insufficient, gives to them the insufficient illusion of independence that precisely constitute their contingency. (*WW* 17:452-3, *LPEG*:104)

According to Hegel, the contingency of the contingent consists in its “lack of *a complete connection* with other things” (ibid), and precisely because of this, the contingent is an *individual*. (*Vereinzelung* means both isolation and individuation). But the individuality of the contingent is not a full-fledged and determinate individuality, but an individuality that merely results from *lack* of determination [beziehunglose Vereinzelung] (*WW* 17:450, *LPEG* 103). To summarize, the contingent and the necessary are both actual; but whereas the necessary should be understood in terms of the totality of inter-relations, the contingent is that which shows itself, in Thomas Sören Hoffman’s wording, as “punctual”, separated from the totality (2004:353). In Hegelese, necessity should be understood in terms of mediation, and contingency in terms of immediacy.

But this is only one side of the story. Hegel makes another set of arguments to show that the reverse is – also – true. That is, the necessary is *not* relational, and the contingent *is* relational. According to Spinoza, “a thing is called ‘necessary’, *either* in respect of its essence, *or* in respect of its cause. For the existence of something follows necessarily *either* from its essence *or* in respect of its cause.” (E1p33sch1, my emphases) We do not need to discuss Spinoza’s theory of causation or essence here; what we need to know is that Spinoza defines necessity in two ways (translated into Hegelian language): (1) External determination: the necessary is that which is determined by relation to other things. (2) Internal determination: the necessary is that which is immanent and in-itself. Hegel takes this Spinozist insight, and develops it to its logical conclusion. If for Spinoza, the necessary is *either* externally determined *or* internally determined, for Hegel the necessary is *both and at the same time* externally *and* internally determined. I have discussed the former point; now Hegel tell us:

Conversely, however, since an existing thing stands in a condition of complete connection, it is in all aspects conditioned and dependent and thus completely *dependent*. In necessity alone, rather, do we find the independence of a thing: what is necessary *must* be. Its *having to be* expresses its independence in such a way that what is necessary *is, because it is*. [Sein *Seinmüssen* drückt seine Selbständigkeit so aus, daß das Notwendige ist, weil es ist.] (*WW* 17:453, *LPEG* 105)

If the necessary is something completely dependent upon other things, then it is not necessary; since its existence is *contingent* upon the existence of those things. If the necessary is “removed from such a connection”, Hegel emphasizes, “it is isolated” and therefore “at once immediately contingent” (*ibid*). The concept of necessity, according to Hegel, requires independence.

In a similar vein, Hegel argues that the contingent is dependent upon other things. The contingent “do not come from themselves, nor do they proceed by themselves” (*WW* 17:448, *LPEG* 101); if they did so, they would be self-sufficient and necessary, *not* contingent. The isolation of a contingent thing is not by virtue of itself, but by virtue of other things isolating the contingent thing. That is, the contingent things in their very seeming independence are dependent on other things:

Contingency claims things in virtue of their isolation [Vereinzelung]; therefore, they may equally exist or not exist. But they are just as much the opposite, not isolated but utterly related to each other as determinate and delimited [beschränkt]. But they are no better off as a result of this opposing determination. Isolation lends them the illusion [Schein] of independence, but their connection with other things, i.e. with each other, expresses the fact that individual things are at the same time not independent, shows that they are conditioned and affected by other things, that they are necessary by means of other things, not by means of themselves. (*WW* 17:449, *LPEG*: 102)

Hegel's analysis shows us that necessity and contingency are not to be understood in separation from each other. Rather, in the language of the logic of essence, they form a reflection-logical relation – more precisely, a relation of “opposition” – with each other. That is, the relation of (1) necessity *and* (2) contingency is in fact the relation of (1) the relation of *necessity* and contingency *and* (2) the relation of necessity and *contingency*. In Chapter Two, I have discussed in detail how each of the “opposing” categories is contradictory; since each category contains the other as its moment, while at the same time excludes it from itself. Thus, for Hegel both necessity and contingency are contradictory; yet, as we will see later, the mode of their contradiction is decisively different from each other.

We can now understand why Hegel criticizes the cosmological proof of the existence of God. A succinct formulation of the cosmological proof is the following: “*Because the worldly is contingent, therefore an absolutely necessary being exists.*” (*WW* 17:460, *LPEG*: 111). According to Hegel, if we think of the contingent and the necessary as separate from each other, it is not possible to make the *transition* from the contingent to the necessary. Rather, “a gulf [Kluft] is plainly fixed between them” (*WW* 17:470, *LPEG*:118). In this way, the transition remains, that is, only an “*external necessity*” (*WW* 17:461, *LPEG*:111), which does not have any “*objective significance*”; it does not lie *immanently* in the matter itself; rather, it is merely present in “a wholly *subjective sense*” in *us* who make this transition from the contingent to the necessary (*WW* 17:462, *LPEG*: 112). In contrast to the proof, Hegel believes, one has to think that the contingent is *already* mediated with the necessary. “The being of the contingent is *not* its own being, but *only* the being of *an other*, and indeed it is defined as the being of *its other*, the

absolutely necessary.” (*WW* 17:468, *LPEG*: 117) That is, the true transition is not the transition from the contingent to the necessary, which is impossible, but it is “the transition that is inherently contained in the contingent itself – the transition from one of each of the elements that constitute the contingent to its other.” (*WW* 17:485, *LPEG* 130) According to Hegel, the necessary should not be understood in terms of “negation” (i.e. negation of contingency), but in terms of “negation of negation” (i.e. negation of contingency, but in such a way that contingency is already understood in terms of negation of necessity) (*WW* 17:518). This is one way to understand the contradictoriness of necessity for Hegel. Necessity results solely through the interaction of contingent things with each other, i.e. it is the result, but at the very same time it is contradictorily present from the beginning, governing the contingent.

It is now clear why Marx regards Hegel’s proof of the existence of God as a justification by means of degradation. In the traditional conception of God, God is a necessity, which lies *outside* the messiness of the contingent world. *First*, there is a necessary God, which *then* creates the contingent. In Hegel’s conception, however, there is no cosmogony involved. For Hegel necessity is already “immanent” in the contingent, and only needs to “raise itself up” [*sich erheben*] from the interaction of the contingent; but in such raising up it has already ruled the contingent and determined them as being contingent (*WW* 17:462, *LPEG* :112). For Hegel, such an immanent necessity, which produces and reproduces itself through its relation with contingency, is tantamount with “actuality”. Thus, for Hegel, the most essential being is not an external God, but actuality itself conceived as necessary. In Hegel’s own words, “being in its own most essentiality is actuality, and actuality is inherently the relationship between contingency and necessity

as such that finds its complete determination in absolute necessity” (*WW* 17:420, *LPEG* 99).

In Chapter Two, I have discussed the logical structure of the relata in the relation of opposition, which Hegel calls them the “positive” and the “negative”. I have explained that there is an asymmetrical relationship between the positive and the negative. The positive is primarily defined in terms of self-identity, which is subordinately related to the negative to secure its identity. In contrast, the negative is primarily defined in terms of its non-identity, which is related to the positive, as its source of identity. The same logical structure obtains between “necessity” and “contingency”. According to Hegel, “being is simple equality with itself; contingency, however, is being that is absolutely unequal to itself and self-contradictory, and it is only in the absolute necessary that is once more restored to this condition of self-equality” (*WW* 17:467, *LPEG* 116). However, while the relation of necessity and contingency at its logical foundation is akin to the relation of the positive and the negative, it is nonetheless much more determinate and concrete. In the relation of the positive and the negative, the negative is, relatively speaking, self-standing. This is emphatically not the case with contingency. For Hegel, “the contingent by its very nature is that which dissolves itself [sich aufzulösen]” (*WW* 17:485, *LPEG* 131). In the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel makes it clear that it is in the nature of contingent to be “eaten up” [verzehrt], to be “consumed” [verbraucht], to “submerge” [untergehen], to be “demolished” [zugrunde gehen], to be “sacrificed” [aufopfern] (*EnzL.* §146, §147Z). Indeed, according to Hegel, the very term “contingency” [Zufall] already suggests “a kind of existence whose special character is to fall [fallen]” (*WW* 17:420, *LPEG* 99). When Hegel talks of the “power of necessity” (*EnzL.* §151), he means that necessity has

the power to demolish and annihilate the particular contingent phenomena. To conclude, while both necessity and contingency for Hegel are contradictory – since each relates to the other as its own constitutive moment, while excluding it from itself – the contradiction for contingency is the source of its destruction and annihilation, but for necessity it is the source of its self-identity.²³¹

We can make sense of the nature of contradiction in contingency more when we look again at Hegel's critique of the cosmological proof (Cf. Höhle 1998:191-2). In the Thirteenth Lecture (*WW* 17:460ff, *LPEG* 111ff), Hegel reconstructs the conventional cosmological proof in the following way:

- 1- If the contingent exists, then the necessary exists.
- 2- The contingent exists.
- C- Therefore, the necessary exists.

According to Hegel, both premises of this inference are wrong. (1) The first one is wrong, since it conceives the contingent as the ground of the necessary, thereby, making the necessary *dependent* on the contingent. Now, if necessary is dependent on contingent, it means that its existence is not necessary; rather it is *contingent* upon the existence of the contingent. (2) The second premise is wrong, since it uncritically accepts that the contingent exists. This conception is based on representational thought, and is not able to grasp the conceptual structure of the contingent. Hegel believes that if we consider contingency conceptually, we realize that contingency in fact does *not* exist. That is, “the

²³¹ Absolute necessity, which Hegel identifies with substance, is the highest category of the logic of essence. That the absolute necessity is contradictory shows that it is not possible to supersede the contradiction of essence within the framework of essence – essence is inherently contradictory. The resolution of the contradiction occurs through the transition from essence to Concept, where Hegel discusses how subjectivity (agency) is possible, in spite of – and indeed through – contradiction in essence (the social structure). However, an adequate discussion of this point – i.e. the logical relation of social structure and agency – needs a separate dissertation.

being of the contingent is not its own being, but only the being of...its other, the absolutely necessary” (*WW* 17:468, *LPEG* 117). In other words, the contingent for Hegel is a kind of being, whose mode of existence is non-being. Thus, the true inference according to Hegel is the following: Because the contingent is self-contradictory, the necessary exists. This way also we will have the true notion of necessity; since necessity is not, strictly speaking, dependent on, thereby contingent upon, contingency; but dialectically evolves out of the contradiction of contingency²³². Hegel makes the same argument in a crucial part of the *Science of Logic*, namely, in the end of the chapter of contradiction. As I would like to emphasize the close proximity of the *Lectures on the Proof of the Existence of God* and the logic, I allow myself to quote it at length:

The true inference from a finite and contingent being to an absolutely necessary being does not consist in inferring the latter from the former as from a being which *is and remains ground*; on the contrary, the inference is from a being that, as is also implied immediately in *contingency*, is only in a state of collapse and is *inherently self-contradictory*; or rather, the true inference consists in showing that contingent being in its own self withdraws into its ground, in which it is sublated — and, further, that by this withdrawal it posits ground in such a manner only that it makes itself into the positedness. In an ordinary inference the *being* of the finite appears as the ground of the absolute: because the finite is, therefore the absolute is. But the truth is that the absolute is, because the finite is the inherently self-contradictory opposition, because it is *not*. In the former meaning an inference runs thus: The being of the finite is the being of the absolute; but in the latter: The

²³² Hegel’s argument for the transition from “finitude” to “infinity” in the logic of being is similar. It is wrong to conceive of finitude as a being that exists alongside the infinite, Hegel argues, since it makes the infinite *limited* by the finite, thus in effect renders it finite. In contrast, Hegel believes, the finite has to be understood as a *being* that *is not*, a being that “dissolves itself” into infinity. Hegel writes, “the finite is thus inwardly self-contradictory; it sublates itself, ceases to be.” [Das Endliche ist so der Widerspruch seiner in sich; es hebt sich auf, vergeht.] (*WdL* I:148, *SL* 136)

non-being of the finite is the being of the absolute. (*WdL* II: 79-80, *SL* 443)

4- The Dialectic of Necessity and Contingency in the Logic

4-1- Contingency qua Illusion: The Contradiction of Contingency

One of the main features of Hegel's dialectic is that the earlier categories that are already superseded do not disappear; but they return with the progression of dialectical development. This is not due to an arbitrary decision of Hegel, but has to do with the conceptual structure of reality, which is a unity, composed of more determinate and less determinate categories. Hegel begins the logic of essence with the category of *Schein* (which I translate either as "semblance" or as "illusion"). As I have discussed in detail in Chapter One, semblance for Hegel denotes the givenness of being, but at the same time denotes that such givenness is already mediated through the structure of essence. Such an "illusion" is not merely subjective, and cannot be dispensed with through enlightened reasoning, but it is objective and therefore indispensable to the structure of objects. Now, although the category of semblance belongs to the beginning of the logic of essence, it returns back – conceptually – as the categories of essence develop. In Chapter Two, I have discussed that among "determinations of reflection" the relation of "diversity" functions as a semblance: "diversity" captures the givenness of individuals and "externality" of relations characteristic of being, yet on further dialectical development, it is proved that such "diversity" is a semblance that is already mediated by essence-logical relation of "opposition".

There is one other prominent return of semblance in the logic of essence, namely, in the category of "contingency". We have learned that for Hegel contingency is that

which falls outside the network of relationality of necessity, and for this reason, it is immediate and given. Yet such independence and immediacy of contingency is an illusion; since, contingency, in effect, is already mediated through, and posited by, necessity. Indeed, Hegel talks of the “illusion of contingency” [Schein der Zufälligkeit] (*EnzL*. §145Z), and regards the task of philosophy to “overcome the point of view of mere contingency, and recognize it as an *illusion*, whose essence is necessity” (*GPR* §324). Friedrich Engels, quite consistent with Hegel’s logic of essence, asserts that the contingent are “things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard them as non-existent, as negligible”, yet amid such contingent things and events “the economic movement finally asserts itself [sich durchsetzt] as necessary” (*MEW* 37:463). Note that for Engels there is an endless number of contingencies in history that cannot conceptually be derived from the economic structure of society. These contingencies are real. They exist, yet in their very existence, they do not exist; since, these contingencies ultimately exist not for themselves, but for the necessity of economic laws, which are effective *through* them. In Chapter One, we learned that semblance for Hegel is inherently contradictory and unstable: it is the immediacy of being, but *at very the same time*, it is mediated by the structure of essence.²³³ The same holds for contingency: Contingency is *given*, yet in its very givenness, it is *determined* by necessity.²³⁴ In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel expresses the

²³³ “*Being is semblance*. The being of semblance consists solely in the sublatedness of being, in its nothingness; this nothingness it has in essence and apart from its nothingness, apart from essence, semblance is not. It is the negative posited as negative.” (*WdL* II:19, *SL* 395) I have discussed this passage in detail in Chapter One.

²³⁴ Compare with the following: “The contingent itself has only the sort of existence that is of absolutely no value beyond being a possibility: it *is*, but just as much as it is *not*. In contingency being or existence is...dissected [herauspräpariert] to such an extent that it is at the same time

contradictory character of contingency in the following way:

The contingent therefore presents two sides. First, in so far as it has possibility *immediately* in it — or what is the same thing, in so far as possibility is sublated in it — it is neither *positedness* nor is it mediated, but is *immediate* actuality; it has *no ground* But secondly, the contingent is the actual...as a *positedness* Hence neither is in and for itself but has its true reflection-into-self in an other, *or it has a ground*.

The contingent, then, has no ground because it is contingent; and, equally, it has a ground because it is contingent. (*WdL* II: 205-6, *SL* 545)

We need to understand more precisely what it means that the contingent both and at the same time does and does not have a ground. Indeed, there is a development in Hegel's conception of contingency and its contradictory nature, which I will reconstruct as follows. My exposition does not *exactly* follow Hegel's own exposition in the *Science of Logic*, although it reflects its spirit, I believe, adequately²³⁵ ²³⁶. It is noteworthy that the

determined to be something that is intrinsically a *nullity* [an sich Nichtige] and consequently the transition to its other, to the necessity that is expressed within itself." (*WW* 17:456, *LPEG* 107). Note how Hegel's description of contingency is similar to his description of semblance: "Semblance is intrinsically a nullity [an sich Nichtige]; all that has to be shown is that the determinations which distinguish it from essence are determinations of essence itself, and further, that this *determinacy of essence* which semblance is, is sublated in essence itself" (*WdL* II:21, *SL* 397)

²³⁵ The chapter of modal categories is among the most obscure – if not *the* most obscure – part of the logic, and a reconstruction that closely follows the text risks re-doubling this obscurity in another level. For helpful commentaries that are closely based on the text, See Burbidge (2007: Chapter 2, 16-47), Hoffmann (1991: Kapitel 4, S.278ff), and Houlgate (1995). Yeomans' discussion (2012: Part III, 131-182) is extremely helpful, partly because he reconstructs Hegel's argument not in its purity, but as it pertains to the structure of agency.

²³⁶ The dialectical development that will be presented is similar (but not identical) to the dialectic of semblance. I have discussed in detail the dialectical transformation of semblance in the first chapter. It mainly consists of three stages. First, in the dialectic of the Essential and the Unessential, semblance is regarded as that which touches upon essence, but nonetheless, lies, so to speak, *outside* of essence. Second, semblance is conceived as that which is thoroughly posited by, thereby is dependent upon, essence. Third, through the dialectic of "reflection", essence gets

three senses of contingency discussed below cannot strictly be separated from each other; rather they form a *continuum* from less determinate conception of contingency to more determinate ones.

4-2- The Three Forms of Contingency in the Logic

4-2-1 Contingency as the *Beyond Necessity*

The first conception of contingency is that which cannot be derived from the conceptual structure of reality. Whatever can be reached through conceptual development is necessary; whatever lies *beyond* conceptual determination, i.e. whatever cannot be *theoretically* grasped, is contingent. In this way, the contingent is a brute fact that can be empirically known, but cannot be understood, and there is no rational account why it is the way it is. In the section of “Administration of Justice” in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel emphasizes that there is a “*purely positive* aspect of law” [das *rein Positive* der Gesetze] that cannot be dispensed with:

It is impossible to determine by *reason*, or to decide by applying a determination derived from the Concept, whether the just penalty for an offence is corporal punishment of forty lashes or thirty-nine, a fine of five thalers as distinct from four talers and twenty-three groschen or less, or imprisonment for a year or for 364 days or less, or for a year and one, two, or three days. And yet an injustice is done if there is even one lash too many, or one taler or groschen, one week or one day in prison too many or too few. It is reason itself which recognizes that contingency, contradiction, and semblance have their (*albeit limited*) sphere and right, and it does not attempt to reduce such contradictions to a just equivalence. (GPR §214)

its full articulation in that it posits semblance as its (essence's) own presupposition. The reader will notice a similar dialectical path in the case of contingency.

According to Hegel, law, which by definition is universal, cannot possibly be *complete*. While applying the universal law to individual cases, thus, the law has to be supplemented with contingent decisions that cannot be accounted for through law. The existence of contingency in the process of administration of justice is not a defect of law, Hegel emphasizes, but it is exactly that which makes it possible that a decision, a judgment can be made. Without such contingency, therefore, law loses its effectiveness and “actuality”. In other words, the “actuality” of law “necessarily” requires “contingency” as its constitutive moment. Now, although the judgment made is ultimately contingent (365 or 366 days of imprisonment), it is not a free-floating contingency, but it is a contingency whose limits are defined by the necessity of laws (it cannot be 3650 days). That is, contingency is both grounded (on the necessity of law), and groundless (by virtue of the necessity of law giving it a general limit within which it can freely, i.e. without the imposition of law, be materialized.) The contingent is, therefore, contradictory; yet its mode of contradiction is under-determinate. It results from a qualitative determination (that imprisonment has to be necessarily made) and a quantitative determination (that the imprisonment can contingently be 365 or 366 days) that remain “indifferent” to each other. The “externality” of relation between necessity and contingency – such externality, which is characteristic of the logic of being – has to be developed further.²³⁷

²³⁷ There remains one major worry, namely, if we define contingency as that which lies beyond the theoretical grasp, how can we be sure that the boundary between necessity and contingency that we draw is a correct one? (Cf. Höhle 1998:91, footnote 79). The example given is about ethical issues, but the worry is even more pressing in the theoretical domain. It is too easy a solution, so the worry goes, to relegate whatever we cannot currently know to the domain of contingency. In this way contingency functions as a shield for our ignorance, as a pretext that

4-2-2- Contingency as the Condition: Relative Contingency

If we look more closely at the concept of contingency, we realize that it is not simply that which lies *beyond* necessity, but it actually functions as a “condition” of necessity, thereby as already mediated by necessity. Indeed, in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel explicitly develops the concept of contingency in relation to the category of “condition” [Bedingung]:

The *externality* of actuality contains more precisely this: that the contingency as immediate actuality is essentially what is identical with itself only as *being posited*, but a being posited that is just as much sublated, i.e. an existing externality [eine daseiende Äußerlichkeit]. It is thus something *presupposed*, the immediate existence [Dasein] of which is at the same time a *possibility* and has

justifies our laziness not to pursue further theoretical determination. It is not difficult to find examples in the history of sciences, where what had previously been considered as a matter of givenness, now can be theoretically explained. This point – that the boundary between necessity and contingency seems to be arbitrary – is in effect the heart of a Spinozist critique of Hegel: namely, if we allow brute facts and contingency in our theoretical considerations, then in principle *everything* could be considered as a brute fact, as contingent (hence, Spinoza’s famous explanatory principle, “all or nothing”). Hegel, as I take him, is silent to this worry – and for good reasons. What is necessary and what is contingent ultimately is not only a matter of logic, but also a matter of concrete historical, social, and scientific conjuncture which takes some things and events as necessary, and others as contingent. The central category of Hegel’s modal ontology is “actuality”, which has both “logical” and “experiential” content. Furthermore, in allowing contingency into his system, Hegel’s philosophy is much more congenial to scientific *practice* than Spinoza’s. Any scientific activity necessarily has to be selective. That is, it must simply disregard many things and events, and count them as contingent; otherwise, the scientific practice would not be able to take off the ground at all. If one does not distinguish necessity and contingency, one totally loses one’s sense of orientation about what really matters. In his *Dialectic of Nature* (1883), Engels forcefully argues that in the mechanistic conception of natural sciences, which bars contingency altogether, “contingency is not explained by necessity, but rather necessity is degraded to the production of what is merely contingent. If the fact that a particular pea-pod contains six peas, and not five or seven, is of the same order as the law of motion of the solar system, or the law of the transformation of energy, then as a matter of fact contingency is not elevated into necessity, but rather necessity degraded into contingency.” (MEW 20:488, MECW 25:500)

the determination of being sublated – of being the possibility of another – the *condition*. (*EnzL.* §146) (See also *EnzL.* §148.)

According to Hegel, contingency is the condition of necessity. The condition is presupposed by necessity; since necessity is not self-standing, and requires the condition for its existence. At the same time, the condition is sublated by necessity, since the condition does not exist for itself, but only for contributing to the existence of necessity. In the *Science of Logic* Hegel conceives of this kind of necessity as “relative or necessity” [relative oder reale Notwendigkeit]. Hegel writes, relative necessity “has a *presupposition* from which it begins; it has its *starting point* from the *contingent*” (*WdL* II:211, *SL* 549). Relative necessity is necessary, but it is necessary only given certain conditions and circumstances²³⁸. As relative necessity is *dependent* on its conditions, it is itself *contingent* (upon these conditions.) In Hegel’s own words, “the really necessary is therefore limited actuality, which, on account of this limitation, is also only a contingent in some other respect.” (*WdL* II:212, *SL* 550) Note the similarity of Hegel’s conception of “relative necessity” to *conventional* cosmological proof of the existence of God. In both conceptions, contingency is conceived to be the condition of necessity. In both conceptions, necessary thus is a limited necessity, not the true “absolute” necessity.

Hegel’s analysis of the relation of necessity and contingency is particularly relevant for his *Philosophy of Nature*. While explicitly deploying the themes developed

²³⁸ There is some analogy between Hegel’s “relative necessity” and Aristotle’s “hypothetical necessity” (*Physics* II: 9). Hypothetical necessity for Aristotle is not unqualifiedly necessary; but its necessity is based on some contingent “hypotheses”. The necessity of saw being made out of metal is “hypothetically” necessary; since this is only necessary insofar as the saw is to perform the operation of sawing. However, the analogy with Aristotle ends here; since the hypothesis to which necessity is related for Aristotle is not any contingent condition, but always a “goal” or a “purpose” to be achieved. In Hegel’s objective logic any talk of purpose is misguided; the concept of purpose only comes in the logic of Concept, where the metaphysics of subjectivity is being worked out.

so far in the logic of essence, Hegel asserts,

In this [i.e. nature's] externality, the determinations of the concept have the semblance of an *indifferent subsistence* and *isolation* [*Vereinzelung*] with regard to one another; and the concept therefore is present only as something inward. Consequently, nature exhibits no freedom in its existence, but only *necessity* and *contingency* (*EnzN.* §248).

And:

The *contradiction* of the Idea, arising from the fact that, as nature it is external to itself, is more precisely this: that on the one hand there is the *necessity* of its forms which is generated by the Concept, and their rational determination in the organic totality; while on the other hand, there is their indifferent *contingency* and indeterminable lawlessness. (*EnzN* §250)

According to Hegel, nature is necessary insofar as it is determined by laws, regularities, and tendencies that persist through time. Yet, insofar as individuals are concerned nature is contingent. It is impossible to know the behavior of one individual bacterium of a specific species; it is only possible to know the behavior of the bacteria as a species, or in a population, i.e. collectively. Yet, the behavior of one bacterium is not purely random, rather it is such that it follows the necessary regularities that the species has. In Hegel's words, "traces of conceptual determination [*Spuren der Begriffsbestimmung*] are to be found even in the most particularized object, although these traces do not exhaust its nature" (*EnzN.* §250). The precise way that individuals are is *beyond* the conceptual determination of the species, yet individuals are at the same time the *condition* of necessity of species existing and persisting through time. From the standpoint of the logic of essence, which is the ontology of absolute relationality, there is no Aristotelian "substantial form" which constitutes the "nature" of the species, rather, the species is *solely* derived from the interaction of individuals of the species. Necessity, therefore, is

not opposed to contingency, but obtains through contingency. “Necessity”, in Vittorio Hösle words, “is namely only that, which proves to be unavoidable under contingent, arbitrary cases” (1998:89).

Hegel, thus, shifts the concept of natural law *away* from Newtonian-type conception of natural law. In the latter, there is a strict dichotomy between necessity and contingency. The laws are necessary, unalterable, and untouchable. The contingency only pertains to the “initial conditions”. Whether a glass dropped breaks or not depends on the initial height, from which the glass is dropped, or the makeup of the glass, or the makeup of the ground, on which the glass is dropped – and all these are contingent – but the glass in any case follows the strict law of gravitation.²³⁹ This means that law, in Newtonian type of explanation, is a function whose input is contingently given; but the law itself is necessary. In contrast, for Hegel, law, which gets its full articulation especially in biology and in the social sciences, is such that it does not *exclude* contingency, but obtains *through* it. Hegel recapitulates his discussion of the interrelation of “law” [Gesetzt] and “appearance” [Erscheinung] in the logic of essence in the following way:

Accordingly, law is not beyond appearance, but is immediately *present* [gegenwärtig] in it; the realm of law is the *tranquil* image [*ruhige* Abbild] of the world of existence [Existenz] or appearance. But the fact is rather that both form a single totality, and the existent world is itself the realm of laws, which, as that which is simply identical, is also identical with itself in positedness or in the self-dissolving self-subsistence of existence. Existence withdraws into law as into its ground; appearance contains these two, the simple ground, and the dissolving movement of the appearing universe whose essentiality it is. (*WdL* II:153-4, *SL*)

²³⁹ Hösle (1998:92-3) explains that Hegel can accommodate the conception of “initial condition”, but he does not further stress that Hegelian type of explanation is *fundamentally* different from the Newtonian type.

The law is “tranquil”, but it is a tranquility that results from “self-dissolving” of the appearance. There is no dichotomy between “law” and “appearance”, but the “withdrawal” of appearance is that which makes law what it is. While writing down this passage in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, Lenin enthusiastically comments,

This is remarkably materialistic and remarkably appropriate (with the word “ruhige”) determination. Law takes the quiescent—and therefore law, every law, is narrow, incomplete, approximate. (1961 [1916]:151)

Law is “narrow, incomplete, and approximate”, according to Lenin, as it is always mediated by “appearance”. From the architectonic standpoint, Hegel discusses law and appearance *before* his modal categories, and he does not, therefore, use the language of necessity and contingency. But the issue is *conceptually* similar. The necessity of laws is approximate, because the necessity is not self-standing, but *results* from the interaction of the contingent. Therefore, within the Hegelian framework, one can talk of the *laws of contingency*, a phrase that is totally incomprehensible within the framework of Newtonian-type of explanation. Yet, this comes, of course, with a price. Within the Hegelian framework, it is impossible to determine the behavior of one individual through law; it is only possible to know the behavior of the essence as a totality. To use a sentence that fascinated Goethe, for Hegel, as far as the objective structure of the world is concerned “individuum est ineffabile”.²⁴⁰²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Cf. Wolfgang Wieland (1995), especially S.7ff. Wieland’s discussion is about contingency in general, and he does not refer to Hegel.

²⁴¹ The motivation for the transition from the logic of essence to the logic of Concept precisely lies in the fact that within the logic of essence, individuals remain under-determinate. That is, insofar as the objective logic is concerned, for Hegel, individuation necessarily fails. Proper individuation only occurs through “subjectivity”, that is, through understanding of oneself as an

4-2-3- Absolute Contingency

In Hegel's critique of the cosmological proof of existence of God we learned that it is inadequate to conceive contingency and necessity as equally *existing* side-by-side each other; rather one has to understand contingency as *non-existent*, more precisely, as a *moment* of necessity, namely, as a moment that is simultaneously posited and superseded by necessity. The same argument explains the transition from "relative" necessity to "absolute" necessity in the *Science of Logic*. In relative necessity, although the necessity of law, and contingency of individuals reciprocally mediate each other; necessity in the end remains dependent on contingency, which functions as a "condition" for necessity. In relative necessity, Hegel emphasizes, "the *presupposing* [of conditions] and the self-*returning movement* [from conditions] are still separate – or necessity has not yet *out of itself determined itself into contingency*" (*WdL* II 212, *SL* 550). The movement of the real necessity is from contingency to necessity; not yet the movement of necessity "from itself to itself" [*aus sich selbst zu sich*] (*WdL* II:213, *SL* 550). Whereas in real necessity contingent presuppositions fall apart *from* necessity, the "presupposition" that the absolute necessity has is "its own positing" (*WdL* II:214, *SL* 551). In other words, necessity produces contingency, so to speak, out of itself:

It is therefore necessity *itself* which determines itself as *contingency* – in its being repels [*abstößt*] itself from itself and in this very repulsion has only returned into itself, and in this return, as its being, has repelled itself from itself. (*WdL* II 214, *SL* 551)

This language is highly reminiscent of the determining reflection, which posits its own

individual, who can say to himself "I". The transition from the logic of essence to the logic of Concept has an enormous social and political significance – it is concerned with the issue how "agency" is possible within a "social structure" that reduces the individuals to contingency. A proper discussion of this transition needs a separate book.

presupposition. Indeed, the absolute necessity as the pure relation with itself is the *highest actualization* of the determining reflection. The absolute necessity posits things as contingent, but only to supersede them, and to integrate them within itself as necessary. It is in the figure of “absolute necessity” that we can properly talk of the “power of necessity” (*EnzL* §151); since, in contrast to relative necessity, the contingent things are now generated by necessity (qua necessity’s own contingency), *and* at the same time they are destroyed by necessity (since they are contingent). That is, the contingent things are simply powerless against the absolute power of necessity.²⁴²

Hegel also explains the transition from relative necessity to absolute necessity in terms of the dialectic of form and content. In relative necessity, necessity pertains to the “form” of necessity, and the “content” is filled from outside, from contingency, which remains external to necessity. The form of necessity is therefore “constrained” by the content (*WdL* II:212, *SL* 550). In the figure of relative necessity, the dualism of form and content, or the dualism of necessity and contingency is still preserved. But in absolute necessity, the content is produced, so to speak, out of the form of necessity. For this reason, Hegel names absolute necessity “absolute form” (*EnzL*. §149). This does not however mean – I emphasize – that a cosmogonic process or a creation *ex nihilo* is involved here; rather it means that “the form in its realization has penetrated [durchdrungen] all its difference [from content] and made itself transparent” such that one can say that now “the distinction between form and content is vanished.” (*WdL*

²⁴² Cf. Charles Taylor’s account: “The two [i.e. necessity and contingency] do not just coexist. Necessity has the higher place. Real necessity shows us necessary consequences of contingent conditions. Necessity is an island in a sea of contingency. But in the category of absolute necessity the position is reversed. Contingency is rather the ornament borne by the necessary structure of things.” (1975:285)

II:214, *SL* 551). This means that, in Gerhart Schmidt's formulation "the absolute necessity is not any formalism; although the side of form has become even more stronger in it" ²⁴³. In other words, whereas in relative necessity, the form is "indifferent" or "external" to the content, in absolute necessity the form has absolute power over the content, and relates to it as the sovereign. The contingent content, which is initially external to and different from the form, is completely taken up by the absolute form, and functions as a moment of the form.

Whereas relative necessity is a kind of "law", which obtains through contingency of individuals, absolute necessity for Hegel is a "totality", which posits and supersedes individuals. Hegel identifies "absolute necessity" with "actuality" itself and indeed with the highest form of actuality – "substance". In other words, for Hegel, "actuality", once conceived through modal categories of necessity and contingency, is "substance" which is able to generate and destroy "accidents"²⁴⁴. Hegel writes,

It [i.e. absolute necessity] is as much simple immediacy or *pure being* as simple reflection-into-self or *pure essence*; it is this, that these two are one and the same. That which is simply necessary only is because it *is*; it has neither condition nor ground. But equally it is *pure essence*; its being is simple reflection-into-self; it is, *because* it is. As reflection, it has a ground and condition, but it has only itself for ground and condition. (*WdL* II:215, *SL* 552)

²⁴³ "Die absolute Notwendigkeit verleugnet nicht den Inhalt, sondern bezieht sich auf ihn, auf das Zufällige. Aber sie bezieht sich darauf souverän, als das übergegensätzliche Unendliche auf das Endliche...Sie ist daher nicht mehr die bloße abstrakte Umkehrung der Zufälligkeit. Die Notwendigkeit ist überhaupt die Gegenspielerin der Zufälligkeit; sie muß also mit dem Inhalt (dem Zufälligen) fertig werden. Als *absolute* Notwendigkeit hat sie den Inhalt gemeistert...Die absolute Notwendigkeit ist kein Formalismus mehr, wenngleich die Seite der Form wieder gestärkt ist. Der Inhalt oder das Zufällige ist in diesem Absoluten selbst verankert, damit ist die Reflexion nicht mehr äußerlich, sondern in dieses Absolute einbezogen." (Schmidt 1973:199)

²⁴⁴ See Chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of Hegel's conception of "substance", and what it means that it has "absolute power" over individuals.

According to Hegel, absolute necessity is a being that constitutes all individuals, and for this reason, it is independent from them. Yet, in its very independence, it is dependent on individuals, since it can *only* be manifested through individuals. Absolute necessity, therefore, is *not* a pre-mediated Platonic One that *then* manifests itself in individuals; rather, it is a One that *solely* obtains through the mediation of individuals. That absolute necessity is both and at the same time dependent and independent of individuals makes it contradictory. Yet, its contradiction gives it cohesion and stability, whereas the contradiction of contingency, as we have seen before, is the source of its annihilation and destruction.

In Christopher Yeomans' language, in contrast to relative necessity in which there is a "looseness of fit" between the contingent and the necessary, in absolute necessity a "tightness of fit" obtains between the two (2012:157). Such tightness of fit occurs when there is a fully developed form of "totality", such as in organisms, in the works of art, in the structure of agency²⁴⁵, and more important for my dissertation, in "capital" which is a self-maintaining and self-reproducing social system²⁴⁶. In all these forms of "totality", necessity and contingency are so interwoven that each individual, in its very contingency and replaceability, can be conceived as necessary and irreplaceable. I would like now to *very briefly* illustrate this point through (a) George Lukács' aesthetic theory, and (b) Marx's philosophy of history.

(a) According to Lukács, in works of art, there is no "fixed antinomy" between

²⁴⁵ From the purely systematic point of view, "agency", "organism", and the "work of art" (although Hegel does not discuss the last in the logic) belong to the logic of Concept, where the categories of "purpose" and "life" are being addressed. Absolute necessity in the logic of essence is a "blind" necessity that has not yet superseded in the freedom of the Concept.

²⁴⁶ See my detailed discussion of "capital" as a "totality" in Chapter 4.

necessity and contingency. Rather, in art contingency has a “friendly and fruitful coexistence with categories that express higher force, order and necessity” (*GLW* 11:750). Indeed, for Lukács, it is exactly through incorporation of contingency that the works of art acquire the quality of “naturalness”, “warmth” and “liveliness”, such qualities that are absent in scientific enterprises that try to eliminate contingency. To give an example from Lukács, when in *War and Peace* the severely wounded Andrei Bolkonski is laid on operating table, he *accidentally* sees his old rival and enemy Anatol Kuragin in the same room, getting his leg amputated. This meeting in this place and time is a *brute accident*. But the abstractness of this accident is superseded, in that seeing Kuragin initiates an existential crisis in Andrei that makes the content of the next part of the book. The development of Andrei’s character is continued in the rest of the book through a series of *accidental* events that eventually leads to a thorough portrayal of Andrei and his relationship with other characters of the novel (*ibid*:765-6). This transformation of contingency into necessity is only by virtue of the “effective power” [wirkende Macht] of the totality of the work of art.²⁴⁷ This “effective power” is absent in bad works of art, which can only produce piecemeal gatherings of parts that remain indifferent to each other. In contrast to the so-called “aristocratic” Tolstoy, Lukács gives an example of a so-called “communist” writer, Ernst Ottwalt, in whose work necessity and contingency

²⁴⁷ Also: “Auch darin äußert sich der spontane Materialismus und die spontane Dialektik der künstlerischen Praxis. Denn philosophisch ausgedrückt bedeutet sie eine Bejahung der Objektivität der Erscheinung, zugleich mit der der Objektivität des Wesens unter notwendiger widerspruchsvoller Verbundenheit beider miteinander. Die strenge Auswahl der Details wiederum ist eine der wirksamsten Verkörperungen jener Angemessenheit der Kunst an die tiefsten Lebensbedürfnisse der Menschheit...Auch hier zeigt sich deren spezifische Beschaffenheit darin, daß das Kunstwerk den Phänomenen des Lebens ihre brutale Faktizität, ihre leere Zufälligkeit nimmt und das gestaltete Stück Wirklichkeit nicht nur formal zu einem Ganzen abrundet, sondern als Voraussetzung dieser Tendenz die dargestellten Phänomene als organische Bestandteile eines sinnvollen Zusammenhangs hinstellt.” (*GLW* 11:757).

“confront one another inflexibly and exclusively”. Accidental events for Ottwalt remain mere accidents. They remain mere “examples” that “can be arbitrarily replaced by other examples”. That is, they never become necessary (Lukács 1948:50, in translation 1980:59).

(b) Contrary to some widespread misconception about Marx’s philosophy of history, contingency for him plays an important role in unfolding of events in history. In a letter to Kugelmann (1871), Marx while commenting on the Paris Commune emphasizes,

World history would indeed be very easy to make if the struggle were taken up only on condition of infallibly favorable chances. It would, on the other hand, be of a very mystical nature, if “accidents” (Zufälligkeiten) played no part. These accidents themselves fall naturally into the general course of development and are compensated again by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very dependent upon such “accidents”, which include the “accident” of the character of those who first stand at the head of the movement. (*MEW* 33:209, *MECW* 44:136-7, Marx’s emphases)

According to Marx, therefore, it is not the case that in history there are simply some laws that exist independently from the contingencies. Rather, the necessity obtains through taking up the contingent events, and transforming them into its process. Such contingencies affect the general process of necessity, inasmuch as they can accelerate or delay this process. Therefore, as the contingent events are “effective” in the process of necessity, they become in fact necessary for it.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ To give another example: Hegel’s doctrine of absolute necessity and absolute contingency, once applied to the logic of agency, shows why Hegel is not in favor of abstract Kantian cosmopolitanism. For cosmopolitans, because the fact of being born in a specific country, say, Iran, is contingent, it should not play any role in one’s moral behavior. From a Hegelian

5- The Dialectic of Necessity and Contingency in Capitalism

5-1- Individuals at the “Mercy of Chance” [Herrschaft des Zufalls] in Capitalism

In this section, my aim is by no means to give an exhaustive account of Marx’s conception of the relation of necessity and contingency. This needs another dissertation. My aim is rather to show how some of the themes discussed in Hegel’s logic work out in Marx’s analysis of capitalism. As the theme of the dialectic of necessity and contingency is closely interwoven with the dialectic of totality (substance) and individuals (accidents), my discussion of Marx in Chapter 4 is highly relevant, and this section should be read as a supplement to it.

A defining feature of modern capitalist society is the formation of market economy. In pre-capitalist social formations, there has always been some sort of market, but the market was limited and marginal. It is only in capitalism that market has become universalized, such that all economic things and activities have become thoroughly interdependent. It is exactly this objective inter-relatedness that has made the science of political economy possible; since the contingent facts and activities across society are now interconnected, such that their interaction would compensate each other and produce a necessary order. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel emphasizes that political economy is “one of the sciences which have originated in the modern age as their ground [Boden]”, and elaborates,

There are certain universal needs, such as food, drink, clothing, etc., and how

standpoint, as I take him, the “absolute necessity” of moral action can only obtain, when it incorporates the “absolute contingency” of unchosen “given” conditions (being born in Iran.) This again testifies the centrality of “actuality” in Hegel’s philosophy, and the necessity that obtains through it.

these are satisfied depends entirely on contingent circumstances. The soil is more or less fertile in different places, the years are more or less productive, one man is industrious and the other lazy. But this proliferation of arbitrariness [Willkür] generates universal determinations from within itself, and this seemingly scattered and thoughtless activity is subject to a necessity, which arises of its own accord. To discover the necessity at work here is the object of political economy, a science which does credit to thought because it finds the laws underlying a mass of contingent occurrences. It is an interesting spectacle to observe here how all the interconnections have repercussions on others, how the particular spheres fall into groups, influence others, and are helped or hindered by these. This interaction, which is at first sight incredible since everything seems to depend on the arbitrary will [Willkür] of the individual, is particularly worthy of note; it bears a resemblance to the planetary system, which presents only irregular movements to the eye, yet whose laws can nevertheless be recognized. (*GPR* §189Z)

Quite similar to the laws of nature in biology, for Hegel the laws of market economy do not exclude contingency, but result from “interaction” [Ineinandergehen] of the contingent phenomena that are only “seemingly scattered” [anscheinend Zerstreute].²⁴⁹ Contingency is therefore a semblance, since although it seems that the contingent phenomena generate necessary determinations “from within themselves”, nevertheless, it

²⁴⁹ Indeed, Hegel’s description of the interrelation of necessity and contingency in the structure of the market is very similar to his description of the emergence of necessity out of contingency in the *Encyclopedia Logic*: “The process of necessity begins with the existence of scattered circumstances that seem to [scheinen] have nothing to do with one another and to have no connection between them. These circumstances are an immediate actuality which collapses into itself and a new actuality emerges from this negation. We have here a content that is twofold, as far as its form is concerned. First, it is content of the basic matter (Sache) at issue and, second, it is content of the scattered circumstances that appear as something positive and initially assert themselves in this way. This content, as an inherently nothing, is accordingly inverted into its negative and thus becomes content of the basic matter. The immediate circumstances go under [zugrunde gehen] as conditions, but at the same time are also preserved as content of the basic matter. It is then said that something completely different emerged from such circumstances and conditions and, for this reason, the necessity of this process is called blind.” (*EnzL*. §147Z)

is ultimately necessity that arises “of its own accord”²⁵⁰.

The Hegelian point that necessity and contingency are closely interwoven with each other was crucial for the young Marx in developing his own political economy in contrast to Ricardo and Mill. In a quite remarkable passage in his posthumously published *Comments on James Mill* (1844), Marx writes,

Mill commits the mistake — like the school of Ricardo in general — of stating the *abstract law* without the change or continual supersession of this law through which alone it comes into being. If it is a *constant law* that, for example, the cost of production in the last instance — or rather when demand and supply are in equilibrium which occurs sporadically, contingently — determines the price (value), it is just as much a *constant law* that they are not in equilibrium, and that therefore value and cost of production stand in no necessary relationship. Indeed, there is always only a momentary equilibrium of demand and supply owing to the previous fluctuations of demand and supply, owing to the disproportion between cost of production and exchange-value, just as this fluctuation and this disproportion likewise again follow the momentary state of equilibrium. This *actual* movement, of which that law is only an abstract, contingent and one-sided moment, is made by recent political economy into something accidental and inessential. Why? Because in the acute and precise formulas to which they reduce political economy, the basic formula [Grundformel], if they wished to express that movement abstractly, would have to be: In political economy, law is determined by its opposite, absence of law. [Das Gesetz ist in der Nationalökonomie durch sein Gegenteil, die Gesetzlosigkeit, bestimmt.] (*MEW* 40:445, *MECW* 3:211)

According to Ricardo’s (and James Mill’s) labor-theory of value it is the labor spent in production of commodities (i.e. cost of production) that determine their value (or price).

²⁵⁰ The analogy of market economy to planetary system, although being suggestive and interesting, can potentially be misleading. The seeming irregularities in the planetary system are only irregularities for *us* – the phenomenon itself does not have any irregularity. In contrast, in market economy, as well as in biology, the irregularities are real, and belong to the phenomenon itself.

This means that the market does not have any effect on the value of commodities.

Ricardo could propose this theory, since he simply *presupposed* that in market supply and demand always match, thus rendering the market irrelevant for the value of commodities. However, this presupposition is exactly what is problematic about Ricardo, Marx holds, as in the “actual” world, supply and demand never match, or only sporadically match. Therefore, according to Marx, the Ricardian law, which purports to grasp the “necessity” of the movement of prices, in effect, makes the law “contingent” (namely, contingent upon matching of supply and demand that only sporadically obtains.) Now, Marx accepts the labor theory of value, but he holds that in capitalism there is a constitutive role for market in economy. Indeed, as he later explicitly develops, the value produced can only get “actualized” [verwirklicht] through the market. That market is essential to Marx’s theory of value means that for Marx contingency is indispensable; since market economy, which by definition is not a planned economy, is always rampant with “fluctuations” and “disproportions” between supply and demand. From a logical point of view, Ricardo, quite consistent with the predominant Newtonian rationality then, conceives of law as a necessity, which excludes contingency. In contrast, Marx, inspired by Hegelian rationality, regards necessity and contingency in a dialectical relationship with each other, such that necessity is only actualized through contingency.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ In his *Karl Marx: The Burden of Reason (Why Marx Rejected Politics and the Market)* (2002), Allan Megill, while quoting the above passage, argues that the main reason why Marx rejected market economy is this: because there is always contingency and chance in the market, “the market is not rationally understandable”, therefore, “it is not accessible to scientific understanding” (164). Megill concedes that Marx got his demand for rationality mainly from Hegel; yet he takes Hegel to be a “necessitarian” thinker who holds that “a truly rational knowledge is a necessary knowledge in which nothing is contingent” (162). Megill’s argument is simply wrong, since it is based on a wrong conception of Hegel. Even if we grant that Marx rejected market economy because market fails to be rational, it is very odd to reduce Marx’s

Going into details of Marx's economic theory would take us far afield of our subject. Very briefly, and with an overt simplification: Marx distinguishes between "real value" (or simply "value") of commodities and their "market value" (i.e. "price"). The former is defined through the cost of production, but the latter obtains through the contingencies of the supply and demand in the market. Yet, although real value and market value are distinct from each other, there is ultimately no strict dichotomy between the two. As Marx years later in the *Grundrisse* (1858) emphasizes,

The *market value* is always different, is always below or above the [real] value of a commodity. Market value equates itself with real value by means of its constant oscillations, never by means of an equation with real value as if the latter were a third party, but rather by means of constant non-equation of itself (as Hegel would say, not by way of abstract identity, but by constant negation of the negation, i.e. of itself as negation of real value. (*MEW* 42:72, *G* 137)

For Marx the real value is not an observable thing; it is rather a necessity that undergirds the observable price of commodities. This necessity functions as "the driving force and the moving principle [die Triebkraft und das bewegende Prinzip] of the oscillations which commodity prices run through", namely, as "the law of the motion" of the prices (ibid). In *Capital* (1867), Marx further clarifies that "the quantitative incongruity between price and magnitude of value" or "the deviation of the former from the latter" is emphatically "no defect" of the price-form,

but, on the contrary, it makes this form the adequate one for a mode of production whose laws can only assert themselves as blindly operating averages between constant irregularities. [sondern macht sie umgekehrt zur adäquaten Form einer

demand for rationality merely to a "scientific understanding" of the world. Quite in accord with Hegelian philosophy, Marx's conception of rationality is broad, one which includes moral and ethical dimensions.

Produktionsweise, worin sich die Regel nur als blindwirkendes Durchschnittsgesetz der Regellosigkeit durchsetzen kann.] (*MEW* 23: 117, *C I*: 196)²⁵².

The idea that the necessity of economy occurs through the contingent fluctuations of the market – in this abstraction and on its own – does not seem to be an adequate reason why Marx rejected market. Indeed, even the archenemy of Marx in the twentieth century, Friedrich von Hayek, believes that a “spontaneous order” in economy evolves out of the contingent decisions of individuals. However, if we regard this idea in the overall structure of Marx’s thought, it becomes clear why it has a significantly critical bent. For Marx, commodities in capitalism are not inert objects. Rather, they are social institutions that exert power over individuals, coercing individuals to abide by their logic. Individuals are purportedly self-determining, but in effect it is their products of labor that determine them. As the logic of the commodities is the logic of contingency and a necessity that comes through it, individuals in capitalism inevitably become a “plaything of alien powers” [Spielball fremder Mächte] (*MEW* 1:355, *MECW* 3:155).²⁵³ Whereas Hayek thinks that market is “the most efficient” way of organizing economy, Marx argues that the market economy in capitalism renders masses of people unemployed; tends to reduce the wage of workers to a minimum, and is necessarily fraught with economic crises that could destroy lives of millions of people. It is in this framework that Marx rejects the

²⁵² Cf. also, Marx’s letter to Kugelmann, July 11, 1868: “The point of civil society is precisely that, a priori, no conscious social regulation of production takes place. What is rational and necessary by nature asserts itself only as a blindly operating average.”(*MEW* 32:553, *MECW* 43:69)

²⁵³ G.A. Cohen in *Why not Socialism* argues that the market is a huge casino and the economic status of individuals, for the most part, is the result of pure chance. However, in contrast to normal casinos, to which one can choose to enter or not to enter, market is a casino that encompasses all, and thus leaves no choice for individuals not to enter to (2009:32-33). That is to say, individuals in capitalism are *necessarily* forced to be at the mercy of *chance*.

logic of the market, and argues in favor of a social order that the social production and reproduction of life is determined by self-conscious and transparent decisions of individuals collectively, and not by the contingencies of the products of their labor²⁵⁴.

For Hegel, as we recall, the form of necessity that obtains through fluctuations of contingency is best exemplified in the realm of nature. (“Nature exhibits no freedom in its existence, but only *necessity* and *contingency*” (*EnzN.* §248)). For Marx, capitalist economy is exactly problematic, as it reduces human beings to “natural” objects, subject to the dialectic of contingency and blind necessity. In his early *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* (1844) – a text that had tremendous effect on the young Marx, drawing him into political economy – Engels argues that the law in capitalist economy is “purely a law of nature, and not a law of the mind [Geist]” (*MEW* 1:514, *MECW* 3:433). For Engels, capitalist economic laws are not the result of conscious decisions of individuals, or society as a whole, but quite like the laws of nature have their own independent logic. These so speak “artificial” laws develop into periodic crises that are not preventable; they are indeed more harmful than the periodic “natural” epidemics of plague that haunted Europe in the Middle Ages. Engels writes,

What are we to think of a law which can only assert itself through periodic upheavals? It is certainly a natural law based on the unconsciousness of the participants. If the producers as such knew how much the consumers required, if they were to organize production, if they were to share it out amongst themselves, then the fluctuations of competition and its tendency to crisis would be impossible. Carry on production consciously as human beings — not as dispersed atoms without consciousness of your species — and you have overcome all these artificial and untenable antitheses. But as long as you continue to produce in the

²⁵⁴ For an introductory but helpful account why Marx rejected market, See Jonathan Wolff (1992).

present unconscious, thoughtless manner, at the mercy of chance [Herrschaft des Zufalls] — for just so long trade crises will remain. (*MEW* 1:515, *MECW* 3:434).²⁵⁵

5-2- “Anarchy” in Society and “Despotism” in Workplace

In order to illustrate how the dialectic of necessity and contingency in the market actually reflects back on individuals and determine their lives, I would like to discuss one instance of Marx’s concrete analysis of capitalism, namely, how in capitalism the “anarchy” of the market and the “despotism” in workplace mutually condition each other. Marx elaborates on this issue in *Capital* in the course of his analysis of the distinction between “division of labor in manufacture” and the “division of labor in society” (*MEW* 23:371ff, *Capital*:470ff), where he contrasts his conception with Adam Smith’s.

According to Smith, Marx reports, the division of labor in society and the division

²⁵⁵ Towards the end of his life, Engels in his *Origins of Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) uncritically accepts the identification of the laws of nature with the laws of society, nonetheless, his main point remains true all the same: “But chance [Zufall] is only one pole of an interrelation, the other pole of which is called necessity. In nature, where chance, too, seems to reign, we have long since demonstrated in each particular field the inherent necessity and regularity that asserts itself in this chance. What is true of nature holds good also for society. The more a social activity, a series of social processes, becomes too powerful (mächtig) for conscious human control, grows beyond human reach, the more it seems to have been left to pure chance, the more do its peculiar and innate laws assert themselves in this chance, as if by natural necessity. Such laws also control the chances of the production and exchange of commodities; these laws confront the individual producer and exchanger as strange and, in the beginning, even as unknown powers, the nature of which must first be laboriously investigated and ascertained. These economic laws of commodity production are modified at the different stages of development of this form of production; on the whole, however, the entire period of civilization has been dominated by these laws. To this day, the product is master of the producer; to this day, the total production of society is regulated, not by a plan thought out in common, but by blind laws, which operate with elemental force (Gewalt), in the last resort in the storms of periodic commercial crises.” (*MEW* 21:169-70, *MECW* 26:273-4). (I have kept the translation of Zufall to chance.)

of labor in factory are of the same kind; they are only different in degrees. For Smith, the difference between the two is only “subjective”, that is, it “exists merely for the observer”. In case of the division of labor in factory it is possible to observe all different operations at a glance in one spot, while this is not possible in the division of labor in society. Against Smith, Marx argues that the two are *qualitatively* different. In case of the division of labor in factory, it is only the end product that is a commodity. Thus, the interconnection of different forms of labor in the factory is maintained by a capital that organizes the workplace. In contrast, the division of labor in society is held through *exchange* of commodities. Here, what relates different forms of labor with each other is not a conscious plan of the capitalist, but the purchase and sale of the products of different branches of industry in the market across society. Marx writes,

The division of labor within manufacture presupposes a concentration of the means of production in the hands of one capitalist; the division of labor within society presupposes a dispersal of those means among many independent producers of commodities. While, within the workshop, the iron law of proportionality subjects definite numbers of workers to definite functions, in the society outside the workshop, the play of chance [Zufall] and caprice [Willkür] results in a motley pattern of distribution of the producers and their means of production among the various branches of social labor. (MEW 23:376, C I:476)

Therefore, according to Marx, the form of necessity that is at work in the division of labor in factory is distinct from the form of necessity in the division of labor in society. While the former obtains through “a planned and regulated *apriori* system”, the latter is “an *aposteriori* necessity imposed by nature, controlling the unregulated caprice of the producers, and perceptible in the fluctuations of the barometer of the market prices” [stumme, im Barometerwechsel der Marktpreise wahrnehmbare, die regellose Willkür

der Warenproduzenten überwältigende Naturnotwendigkeit] (ibid). To explicate, the division of labor in society is “aposteriori” since it is *derived* from the contingencies of the market.

For Marx, the two forms of the division of labor are interrelated. The individual capitalist under the “coercive laws of competition” [Zwangsgesetze der Konkurrenz] in the market (*MEW* 23: 335, *C I*: 433) is forced to exert an “undisputed authority” over the workers in factory. The capitalist has no choice apart from organizing the workplace in such a way that it maximizes the efficiency. Thus, on the one hand, in order to expedite the process of production, the worker must be assigned a tiny and repetitive work, which makes him an appendage of machine, thereby divesting him of his humanity; and, on the other hand, the worker must put to work as hard as his physiology allows. Thus, Marx emphasizes, in capitalist mode of production “anarchy in the social division of labor and despotism in the manufacturing division of labor mutually condition each other” (*MEW* 23:377, *C I*: 477).

The point of Marx’s analysis is to attack the ideology of free market; the ideology that holds any planned economy, in restricting choices, hinders the freedom of individuals. In fact, however, the unregulated “free” market, by reflecting back into the workplace, makes the worker systematically subject to the despotism of the capitalist.²⁵⁶ Perhaps Marx was too optimistic to think this despotism remains limited to the workplace,

²⁵⁶ In a characteristic vent of anger, Marx concludes: “The same bourgeois consciousness which celebrates the division of labor in the workshop, the lifelong annexation of the worker to a partial operation, and his complete subjection to capital, as an organization of labor that increases its productive power, denounces with equal vigor every conscious attempt to control and regulate the process of production socially, as an inroad upon such sacred things as the rights of property, freedom and the self-determining ‘genius’ of the individual capitalist. (*MEW* 23:379, *C I*: 477)

but the current neoliberal constellation, with its ideology of “flexible labor arrangement”, has proved that this despotism can indeed be extended beyond the workplace and to home.

6- Freedom qua Contingency qua Illusion

“Contingency, the shape of freedom under the spell.” [der Zufall, die Gestalt von Freiheit unterm Bann.] (Adorno, *GS* 6:338)

I have discussed so far that for Hegel contingency is real; yet its reality is not for its own sake, but for the sake of contributing to the existence of necessity. In other words, contingency in its very reality is not real. I have discussed how this means that contingency for Hegel is a semblance. That is, contingency *seems* to be independent of necessity, but in fact it is fundamentally dependent on necessity. In this section, I will discuss how the shape of freedom that obtains in the logic of essence is a freedom that results from contingency and randomness. The freedom qua contingency is an illusion; since although it is objective and exists; it does not exist on its own, but *solely* functions as a moment of the necessity of essence. Hegel calls this kind of freedom “formal” [formell] – a word that is later taken up by Marx and Marxists to describe the kind of freedom that individuals have in capitalism. My aim in this section is to discuss the formal freedom in Hegel and in Marx, and to show how it is related to contingency.

6-1- Freedom qua Contingency in Hegel

A good point of departure is to consider the distinction between “negative” and “positive” freedom that Isaiah Berlin (re-)introduced in social and political philosophy. Negative freedom is the *absence* of obstacles on one’s action. It is freedom of *non*-interference.

One is free in the negative sense, insofar as one is left over in a space within which one can exercise one's freedom. In contrast, positive freedom is defined in terms of "self-actualization", or "self-determination". One is free in the positive sense, insofar one is able to act in such a way that realizes one's fundamental purposes and values, and insofar as one can take control of one's own life in a significant way (Berlin: 1969).

Now, it is clear that the freedom that obtains in the logic of essence is merely a negative freedom. Recall that in the logic of essence the individual, qua contingency, gains its individuality through *lack* of determination. The individual in essence is not a fully determinate or substantive individual; rather, it becomes individual only through *escaping* from the network of relationality. However, it is not by virtue of itself that the individual can escape such total determination; rather, it is the totality which determines or "posits" the individual as not-fully-determinate entity and contingent. The totality of substance withholding from total determination of individuals gives the individuals some leeway for self-determination, and this leeway is conceived as freedom. This leeway however is only limited, since the contingent always exists not for itself, but for the sake of necessity.²⁵⁷

Calling Hegel's "formal freedom" as "negative" freedom is illuminating, in that it captures its inherent indeterminacy; yet it can be potentially misleading. In liberal political philosophy with its atomistic ontology, negative freedom is real; it is a property of individuals and there is nothing illusory about it. In contrast, in the logic of essence, where there is always absolute primacy of totality over individuals, negative freedom is illusory; it exists – but only as a moment of the totality of essence.

²⁵⁷ From the logical point of view, "positive freedom" only obtains in the logic of Concept, where individuals are in fact self-determining.

Note that freedom qua randomness and contingency is best exemplified in the realm of nature, where individuals are totally subject to the dialectic of necessity and contingency. In the realm of nature, Hegel tells us, contingency has its “free sway” [freies Ergehen], since it is not possible for individuals as individuals to be conceptually determined (*EnzL.* §145Z). Each individual in a species in its shape or biological makeup is unique, but this does not hinder it to be an individual *of* that particular species, despite its individuality. The diversity of individuals of a species, precisely speaking, is not a *genuine* diversity, since at bottom all of them are structurally and conceptually the same. True that the species does not exist apart from individuals – it is only through individuals and their variety that species is constructed – yet this does not change the fact that individuals are only individuals *of* the species, and must contribute to the perpetuation of the species. Hegel uses the spatial metaphor of “surface of nature” to describe the locus of contingency (*ibid*). Individuals are free on the surface of nature to be what they are, but this does not change the deeper necessary regularities or laws of nature. The totality (of a species, or of nature) is

absolute power just because it can freely abandon [frei entlassen] its difference to the shape of self-subsistent diversity, external necessity, contingency, caprice, opinion, which however must not be taken for more than the abstract aspect of *nothingness* [*Nichtigkeit*]. (*WdL* II:283, *SL* 608)

To emphasize: this diversity for Hegel is simply “without concept” [ohne Begriff] – not only because it is impossible *for us* to determine this diversity in its diversity, but more profoundly, because this diversity in its objective structure is chaotic and “arational” [das

Vernunftlose] (ibid) ²⁵⁸.

Within the realm of market economy, Hegel believes, freedom of individuals is similar to the realm of nature. In buying a MacBook rather than a desktop, or even in what initially seems to be deeper, in choosing my profession as a medical doctor or as a civil engineer, I might think that I am free. Yet this freedom is an illusion; as it solely contributes to the perpetuation of the laws of market economy. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel emphasizes that although in civil society it seems to me that I myself determine my own particularity, nonetheless,

this is nothing but a pure mistake [aber ich bin eigentlich darüber nur im Irrtum], since, while I suppose that I am adhering to the particular, the universal and the necessity of the context remains the primary and essential factor. I am thus altogether on the level of semblance, and while my particularity remains my determining principle, that is, my end, I am thereby serving the universal which in fact retains ultimate power over me. (*GPR* §181Z)

To give an example beyond the realm of economy, consider the basic presupposition of Durkheim's work on suicide. Highly conscious of the significance of what he is writing, Durkheim in the introduction to the book emphasizes, "each society is pre-disposed to

²⁵⁸ Compare essence's "frei entlassen" (to freely abandon) of individuals with the Concept's "Gewährenlassen" (to give free reign) to individuals. In order to understand the distinction, the following passage from Hegel's Nürnberg period is helpful. "Gott ist, nach den Momenten seines Wesens, 1. absolut heilig, insofern er das schlechthin in sich allgemeine Wesen ist. Er ist 2. absolute Macht, insofern er das Allgemeine verwirklicht und das Einzelne im Allgemeinen erhält, oder ewiger Schöpfer des Universums. Er ist 3. Weisheit, insofern seine Macht nur heilige Macht ist, 4. Güte, insofern er das Einzelne in seiner Wirklichkeit gewähren läßt, und 5. Gerechtigkeit, insofern er es zum Allgemeinen ewig zurückbringt (*WW* 4:273-4). In this passage, Hegel identifies the absolute power of the totality (God) with its capacity to contain the individual within itself, which simultaneously allows the individual to be what it is. The key is that the totality is absolutely powerful, yet at the same time, it is both good and holy. The identification of the absolute power with goodness distinguishes Hegel's understanding of God from Spinoza's as Majetschak correctly points out (1992:147). Within the structure of Hegel's own logic, such attributes as goodness and holiness only obtain within the logic of the Concept.

contribute to a definite quota of voluntary deaths” (1952 [1897]: 1). Although Durkheim is far from realizing his debt to Hegel, this is a perfect example of the “formal freedom” that obtains in the logic of essence. A particular individual thinks that in voluntarily killing himself he is free, but in fact his freedom is only the result of chance. A given society in a given time through constellation of factors – the level of social cohesion obtained through such collective enterprises as religion, the unemployment rate, the social and economic upheavals and the ensuing disorientation and “anomie” of individuals, etc. – is *necessarily* predisposed to have a certain number of suicide. This is a “social fact”, in Durkheim’s language, that exists independently of individuals. If it is not – *contingently*, randomly – this particular individual that kills himself, another individual well would do it.

From a more general viewpoint, Hegel regards the freedom of choice [Willkür] as freedom qua contingency. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel writes, “choice is *contingency* in the shape of will” (*GPR* §15). (The contingency of choice is also captured in the translation, as Willkür is sometimes translated to “caprice”, or “arbitrariness”). In choosing something over something else, I am *contingently* free; whatever I choose, it could have been otherwise; such freedom would thus remain external to myself. Therefore, in freedom of choice, I am in fact not self-determining, but I am taken to be a “natural” object determined from without – from natural instincts, sexual desire, external manipulation through advertisement, competition with other people, etc. Hegel conceives of contingency, we recall, as contradictory. The contradictory nature of contingency lies in the fact that the contingent is both and at the same time grounded and ungrounded; it is obviously grounded on necessity, but it is also ungrounded, as necessity does not exhaust

its determination, thus leaving some leeway for it to determine itself. The same holds true for the freedom of choice. The freedom of choice is contradictory (*GPR* §15, *EnzL*.145Z) – it is grounded on the external factors, but at the same time, it is ungrounded, since, although it is determined externally, there remains a moment of indeterminacy that makes freedom of choice what it is.²⁵⁹

6-2- Freedom qua Contingency in Marx's Analysis of Capitalism

In Chapter 1, I have discussed how freedom in capitalism for Marx is an illusion. Marx totally grants that there *is* freedom in capitalism; yet he proves that this freedom does *not* exist for its own sake; but solely functions as a moment of the structure of domination. Now, having discussed the dialectic of necessity and contingency in essence we are in a better position to understand the precise nature of formal freedom in capitalism. In this section, I explain Marx's conception of formal freedom in capitalism through the following points: (1) the illusion of freedom of consumption; (2) the illusion of freedom in labor-market; (3) the illusion of freedom to exit; and (4) the illusion of economic desert.

²⁵⁹ In the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel conceives of the inherent contradiction in free choice in terms of contradiction between “form” and “content”: “Freedom of choice proves to be contradictory insofar as form and content still stand opposite one another here. The content of choice is a given content and known to be a content grounded, not in the will itself, but in external circumstances.” (*EnzL*. §145Z). Yeomans' discussion on the contradiction of choice is very helpful (2012:167ff). The free choice is contradictory, in Yeomans' language, because “it is the opposition between the fact that the will takes itself to be the locus of responsibility, and yet when the action is given a rationally satisfying ground or explanation the locus of responsibility is ascribed to external factors.” (171).

6-2-1- The Illusion of Freedom of Consumption

Perhaps the most salient aspect of freedom in capitalism is freedom of consumption. Especially in 20th and 21st century, in which consumerism has reached its peak, the freedom of consumption appears to be the main reason that does the justificatory work for capitalism. Indeed, Marx regards the freedom of consumption as one major point that distinguishes capitalism from pre-capitalist social orders. In a text that was originally intended to be the last part of *Capital: Volume One*, entitled as “Results of the Immediate Process of Production”, Marx writes:

The slave receives the means of subsistence he requires in the form of *naturalia* which are fixed both in kind and quantity, i.e. he receives use-values, the free worker receives them in the shape of *money, exchange-value*, the abstract social form of wealth. Even though his wage is in fact nothing more than the silver or gold or copper or paper form of the necessary means of subsistence into which it must constantly be dissolved – even though money functions here only as a means of circulation, as a vanishing form of exchange-value, that exchange-value, abstract wealth, remains in his mind as something more than a particular use-value hedged round with traditional and local restrictions. It is the worker himself who converts the money into whatever use-values he desires; it is he who buys commodities as he wishes and, as the owner of money, as the buyer of goods, he stands in precisely the same relationship to the sellers of goods as any other buyer. Of course, the conditions of his existence – and the limited amount of money he can earn – compel him to make his purchases from a fairly restricted selection of goods. But some variation is possible as we can see from the fact that newspapers, for example, form part of the essential purchases of the urban English worker. He can save or hoard a little. Or else he can squander his money on drink. But even so he acts as a free agent; he must pay his own way; he is

responsible to himself for the way he spends his wages. (*Results*: 1033,
Resultate: 115)²⁶⁰

According to Marx, I have discussed in Chapter 4, the driving force of capitalist economy – what constitutes its “actuality” – is valorization of value, that is, maximization of profit. Human needs are obviously more or less satisfied in capitalism, but not for their own sake; rather only because the satisfaction of needs is essential for profit making. In other words, use-values for Marx are the *condition* of the sphere of economy; but, strictly speaking, they do not belong to it. A commodity for Marx is essentially defined in terms of its exchange-value. It has to necessarily have *some* use-value, but what kind of use-value it has is totally irrelevant, that is, contingent. To invoke Hegel’s language, the use-value of a commodity, qua contingency, is both grounded and ungrounded. It is grounded on exchange-value; insofar as use-value does not exist on its own, but only as the “bearer” of exchange-value. It is at the same time ungrounded, insofar as it does not matter what kind of need it would satisfy. Corresponding to the contingency of use-value, the freedom that obtains through consumption is also the freedom of contingency. The worker must necessarily spend his money in consumption, but what he buys, from the standpoint of the totality of economy, is irrelevant. To conclude, the freedom of consumption is an illusion; since it only functions as a moment of the process of valorization of value, i.e. as a moment that is both posited and superseded by this process. True that the worker is

²⁶⁰ In the *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), Marx explains that although there is always some leeway for the worker to spend his wage, nonetheless this leeway is much more restricted than that which seems to be the case: “The consumer is no freer than the producer. His opinion depends on his means and his needs. Both of these are determined by his social position, which itself depends on the whole social organization. True, the worker who buys potatoes and the kept woman who buys lace both follow their respective opinions. But the difference in their opinions is explained by the difference in the positions which they occupy in society, and which themselves are the product of social organization.” (*MEW* 4:75 , *MECW* 6:20)

more or less free in the realm of consumption, nonetheless, this freedom does not have any effect on the social relations of production, which define him in the first place.

6-2-2- The Illusion of Freedom in the Labor Market

One central aspect of freedom in capitalism is that the worker, precisely speaking, does not sell his own person, but sells his “labor-power”, which he can *alienate* from himself.

The worker, namely, “the proprietor of labor-power”, Marx writes, “must always sell it [i.e. his labor-power] for a limited period only, for if he were to sell it in a lump, once and for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave”

(MEW 23:182, C I: 271). The periodic renewal of the contract gives the worker a sense of freedom, because it may seem to him that he can renounce working for capital, if he wants to do so. However, as Marx sarcastically observes, this formal freedom *to* sell the labor-power is complemented and mediated by another form of freedom, namely, freedom *from* the means of production. The worker, that is, has “no other commodities for sale, i.e. he is rid of them, he is free of all the objects needed for the realization of his labor-power” (MEW 23:183, C I:273), such that he is coerced to sell his labor-power. No matter what the subjective opinion of the worker is, his freedom remains merely formal, since he has no viable alternative other than selling his labor-power.

Moreover, as I have discussed in Chapter 4, in capitalism due to universalization of relations of exchange that occurs through impersonal medium of money, the social relations get an impersonal character. The individual is not *naturally* bound to any particular estate, guild or master. This gives the worker a certain degree of freedom. However, this freedom is only formal; since although the individual worker – if he is

lucky – can change his masters who dominate him, he must always have *some* master.

The relation of domination, that is, remains untouched. Marx writes,

The slave is the property of a particular master, the worker must indeed sell himself to capital, but not to a particular capitalist, and so within certain limitations, he may choose to sell himself to whomever he wishes; and he may also change his master. (*Results*:1032, *Resultate*:114)

Note how the freedom of the worker is tied up with contingency. In contrast to slave or feudal societies, where there is a *necessary* bound between the slave/the serf and the master, in capitalism the bound between a particular worker and a particular capitalist is *contingent*. However, the kind of freedom that results through this contingency is merely an illusion: it seems to the worker that he is *independent* from the capitalist, but in fact he is totally *dependent* on the class of capitalists. In the *German Ideology* Marx and Engels explicitly state the relation of freedom to contingency in capitalism, and how this freedom in effect hides the deeper relations of domination:

In imagination [Vorstellung], individuals are freer under the dominance of the capitalists than before, because their conditions of life are contingent; in actuality, of course, they are less free, because they are to a greater extent governed by objective coercion [sachliche Gewalt] (*MEW* 3:76, *MECW* 5:78-9).

6-2-3- The Illusion of Freedom to Exit

Due to the impersonal character of social relations in capitalism, the individual worker might be able to climb the social hierarchy, and get into position that allows him to stop selling his labor-power, or even to become a capitalist. This has a strong ideological appeal, as it seems to the worker that he can exit from the rank of the proletariat, if he works hard, or if he is lucky. This is in contrast to feudalism or slave society, where there

is allegedly no feasible way for the serf or slave to cease to be what he is. Marx concedes the existence of the so-called freedom in capitalism, yet he stresses that this freedom remains an illusion. In the *Grundrisse* he writes,

The determinacy of individuals, which in the former case [i.e. feudalism] appears as a personal restriction of the individual by another, appears in the latter case [i.e. capitalism] as developed into an objective restriction of the individual by relations independent of him and sufficient unto themselves. Since the single individual cannot strip away his personal determinacy, but may very well overcome and master external relations, his freedom *seems (scheint)* to be greater in case 2. A closer examination of these external relations, these conditions, shows, however, that it is impossible for the individuals of a class etc. to overcome them en masse without destroying them. A particular individual may contingently get on top of these relations, but the mass of those under their rule cannot, since their mere existence expresses subordination, the necessary subordination of the mass of individuals. (*MEW* 42:97, *G* 164, underlines are mine)

The inference from the fact that *any* worker can cease to be dependent on capital to the fact that *all* workers can achieve such independence is based on a “fallacy of composition”, as Jon Elster explains (1978:107-116, 1985:211). This is a fallacy that infers a collective case from an individual case, i.e. a fallacy that is based on “local-global confusion”. Obviously, in order for capital to function, there must *necessarily* be a class of workers who are coerced to sell their labor-power under the conditions dictated by capital. The reason that a particular individual can rise up in social hierarchy is *only* because not all individuals can do so. That is, the *contingency* of so-called freedom of the

individual worker is mediated and conditioned, to use G.A. Cohen's phrase, by the *necessity* of "collective unfreedom" of the workers (Cohen: 1983).²⁶¹

6-2-4- The Illusion of Economic Desert

One of the appealing aspects of capitalism is the hegemony of the idea of economic desert. Namely, individuals in capitalism earn what they deserve through their talent, effort, responsibility, accomplishment, etc. Marx accepts that there is some variation in income in capitalism, such that the individual worker, through hard-working, may earn a higher income; yet at the same time he believes that such an idea of desert is an illusion, which results from the objective structure of economy. I have briefly discussed the distinction between "value" and "price" of commodities for Marx, which is constitutive of the capitalist economy. The idea of desert has its material foundation in the distinction between "value" and "price" of the commodity of "labor-power", which the worker sells. According to Marx, the "value" of labor-power in a given country at a given period of time is more or less fixed and given. This "value" depends on the level of civilization as well as the general level of *class* struggle at that time and place, which defines the needs and expectations of the workers (*MEW* 23:185, *C I*: 275). However, there is necessarily always some oscillation in the "price" of labor-power. An individual worker might be

²⁶¹ We can see how Marx's analysis fits well with Hegel's logic of essence. For Hegel, as we recall, essence as a totality is defined in terms of domination, but the particular individual remains ultimately indeterminate. However, in this case, there is a difference between Marx and Hegel. In the logic of essence, the properties of an individual could in principle be universalizable. (A property in an individual organism may hold true for all individuals in the species. There is no logical impossibility involved.) In contrast, as Marx conceives capitalism in terms of class antagonism, the universalization of the property of "having the option to exit" is logically impossible in capitalism.

able to sell his labor-power *above* or *below* the given “value” that is defined across the society as a whole. The constant oscillation of the “price” of labor-power around its fixed “value” gives some leeway for the individuals to exert their freedom. It may *seem* to the individual that he is actually the one who determines his income; yet in fact his actual income is a *contingency* that is strictly based on the general *necessary* relation between the class of capitalists and the class of the workers in society as a whole.²⁶²

²⁶² “In the eyes of the slave a *minimal wage* appears to be a constant quantity, independent of his work. For the free worker, however, the *value of his labor-power* and the average wage *corresponding to it* does not appear to him as something predestined, as something independent of his own labor and determined by the mere needs of his physical existence. The *average* for the class as a whole remains more or less *constant*, like the value of all commodities; but this is not how it immediately appears to the *individual* worker whose wages may stand above or below this minimum. The *price of labor* sometimes sinks below and sometimes rises above the *value of labor-power*. Furthermore, there is scope for variation (within narrow limits) to allow for the worker's *individuality*, so that partly as between *different* trades, partly in the *same* one, we find that wages vary depending on the diligence, skill or strength of the worker, and to some extent on his actual personal achievement. Thus the size of his wage packet appears to vary in keeping with the results of his own work and its individual quality... Although, as we have shown, the latter do not affect the general relationship between capital and labor, between necessary labor and surplus labor, the result differs for the individual worker, and it does so in accordance with his particular achievement. In the case of the slave, great physical strength or a special talent may enhance his value to a *purchaser*, but this is of no concern to him. It is otherwise with the free worker who is the owner of *his labor-power*.” (*Results*:1031-2, *Resultate*: 113-4)

Conclusion: The Necessity of Praxis

Mere knowledge even if it went much further and deeper than that of bourgeois economic science, is not enough to bring social powers under the domination of society. What is above all necessary for this is a social *act*. (Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *MEW* 20: 295, *MECW* 25:301)

The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth, i.e., the actuality and power, the this-worldliness of his thinking in practice. The dispute over the actuality or non-actuality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question.²⁶³ (Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach”, *MEW* 3:5, *MECW* 5:3)

Hegel’s logic is the algebra of the revolution. (Alexander Herzen)

In this conclusion, I first summarize my discussion of Marx about the social necessity of illusion in capitalism, and argue how such necessary illusion can only be abolished through revolutionary praxis (Section 1). Then, I turn to Hegel’s logic of essence and summarize my discussion on the issue of how illusion is constitutive of essence. I explain

²⁶³ “Die Frage, ob dem menschlichen Denken gegenständliche Wahrheit zukomme ist keine Frage der Theorie, sondern eine *praktische* Frage. In der Praxis muß der Mensch die Wahrheit, i.e. die Wirklichkeit und Macht, Diesseitigkeit seines Denkens beweisen. Der Streit über die Wirklichkeit oder Nichtwirklichkeit des Denkens, das von der Praxis isoliert ist, ist eine rein *scholastische* Frage.”

how the illusion inherent in essence can only be abolished through the supersession of the logic of essence into the logic of the Concept, and argue that this supersession is tantamount to revolutionary praxis (Section 2). Finally, I discuss Michael Theunissen's interpretation of the transition from essence to the Concept. Theunissen interprets this transition as the transition from relations characterized by power to relations characterized by intersubjective, "communicative" freedom. I argue how his interpretation, both from logical and political point of view, is wrong. (Section 3)

1- The Persistence of Illusion in Capitalism and Marx's Derivation of the Necessity of Praxis

According to one prominent conception of ideology, ideology is fabricated by the powerful, and is then propagated across society through the media that the powerful own. Contrary to this voluntaristic conception of ideology – a conception that reduces ideology to intentional manipulation of people by the powerful – I have argued that for Marx ideology is generated by the totality of social relations, and independently of individuals. For Marx, ideology is not primarily the mental beliefs of individuals; it is rather the objective institutional norms that govern the behavior of individuals. Ideology is thus a "socially necessary illusion" that is systematically related to the totality of society, and helps the totality perpetuate itself.

The critique of ideology, according to Marx, consists in showing how our intuitive awareness relates to the totality of society in capitalism, and thus functions as a moment of totality. In Chapter One, I have argued that in every economic transaction that we make on a daily basis, we presuppose that we are equal and free. Although each single

economic transaction embodies equality and freedom, once such economic transactions are conceived from the point of view of the totality of capital, it turns out that such economic transactions are based on radical inequality and domination. In Chapter Two, I have argued that in our intuitive awareness, the labor-arrangements seem to be “diverse” from each other – some more humane, some less humane – but such diverse labor arrangements, seen from the viewpoint of the totality of capital, are in fact all *essentially* based on the relation of “opposition” between capital and labor. In Chapter Three and Chapter Four, I have argued that in our intuitive awareness, we tend to believe that it is an individual capitalist that exerts power over an individual worker, but once seen from the viewpoint of the totality of capital, it becomes clear that such power is in fact the power of totality that works through individuals, making the former powerful and the latter powerless. Furthermore, I have argued that individuals think that they are – each – unique and indispensable, but once we see the individuals from the point of view of the totality of capital, it becomes clear that the individuals are in fact easily replaceable and dispensable. Finally, in Chapter Five, I have argued that even the most real freedom that seems to us to have obtained in capitalism, i.e. the freedom of consumption, once viewed from the totality of capital, turns out to be solely at the service of maintaining economic laws of capitalism, which subjugate individuals.

Thus, Marx’s critique of ideology in capitalism explains how the beliefs of individuals (about equality, freedom, diversity, and self-determination) in capitalism are illusions. However, since these illusions are objectively materialized (in the institution of market), they cannot be discarded away through the critique of ideology. No matter how deeply I have read and understood Marx’s theory, I cannot but practically act on the basis

of ideology (of equality, of freedom, of diversity) in my everyday life. Marx's *critique of ideology* is thus at the same time the *critique of the critique of ideology*. To paraphrase a well-known phrase from Hegel, Marx's economic theory in its entirety is a "self-culminating critique" [die sich selbst vollbringende Kritik], a critique that by meticulously developing critical concepts of political economy from the most abstract to the most concrete, ultimately destroys itself as critique. The result of Marx's critique of political economy is to show how theoretical, scientific, contemplative activity is unable to eliminate illusions. Rather, in order to eliminate these illusions, the theoretical activity must be ultimately superseded into practical activity. Practical activity meant here is not an instrumental activity, whose purpose is to realize certain given aims within the context of existing social relations. Such instrumental activity is based on the illusions embodied in the social relations, and in turn reinforces them. Rather, by practical activity here, Marx means a kind of activity, which aims to change the very social relations that generate the illusions. Marx calls this kind of practical activity "praxis," or more precisely "revolutionary praxis." The praxis in question is revolutionary in double sense: Firstly, it changes the social relations and the totality thereof, and secondly, because individuals are constituted by social relations, the individuals engaged in praxis are also at the same time engaged with changing their very own selves. This double sense of revolutionary praxis is already addressed in the early Marx. In his *Theses on Feuerbach* he writes,

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change can be conceived and rationally understood only as *revolutionary praxis*.
[Das Zusammenfallen des Ändern[s] der Umstände und der menschlichen

Tätigkeit oder Selbstveränderung kann nur als revolutionäre Praxis gefaßt und rationell verstanden werden.] (*MEW* 3:6, *MECW* 5:4)

Through revolutionary praxis, individuals are able to eliminate the illusions embodied in the totality of social relations, and, by doing so they are able to simultaneously eliminate their own cognitive illusions.²⁶⁴ According to Marx, thus, the revolutionary activity is aiming at the transparency of totality, as well as the transparency of individuals' self-conception. We can understand the importance of transparency for Marx when we consider the fact that in the entire *Capital* Marx does not write about communist society more than two paragraphs, and the fact that in both paragraphs he does not fail to address transparency as the hallmark of the communist society. In contrast to capitalism, which is constitutively defined by illusions, in the communist society, namely, in “an association of free men, working with the means of production held in common”,

[t]he social relations of the individual producers, both towards their labor and the products of their labor, are here *transparent* in their simplicity, in production as well as in distribution. [Die gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen der Menschen zu ihren Arbeiten und ihren Arbeitsprodukten bleiben hier *durchsichtig* einfach in der Produktion sowohl als in der Distribution.] (*MEW* 23:93, *C I*: 172, my emphasis)

And, he emphasizes that the illusions inherent in capitalism

can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves in a *transparent* [*durchsichtig*] and *rational* [*vernünftig*] form. The mystic veil is not removed

²⁶⁴ It is worthwhile to emphasize that for Marx the elimination of illusions can only occur through *collective* revolutionary praxis. The illusions are *socially* constructed, and can accordingly be only *socially* eliminated. Georg Lukács in his *History and Class Consciousness* clearly emphasizes this point: “The individual can never become the measure of all things. For when the individual confronts objective reality, he is faced by a complex of ready-made and unalterable objects which allow him only the subjective responses of recognition or rejection. Only the class can relate to the whole in a practical revolutionary way.” (1971 [1923]: 193)

from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control. (*MEW* 23:95, *C I*:173, my emphases)

To preempt misunderstanding, it is worthwhile to emphasize that by describing communism as illusion-free and as transparent, Marx does not, at any rate, indulge in a wildly romantic idea. His point is not that in the future communist society, there will not be any cognitive failure, or any cognitive dissonance – as human beings are finite, errors inevitably remain. Rather, what is distinctive about communism, according to Marx, is that there will not be any “socially *necessary* illusions.” That is to say, there will not be any illusions that are *systematically* generated and regenerated by social relations.

Note that Marx does not derive the necessity of praxis on the basis of some external moral values. Rather, following Hegel, Marx’s method of critique of theoretical reason is entirely *immanent*. By working through theoretical reason, Marx proves the limits of theoretical reason, namely, that there is an inherent illusion in it that cannot be cleared out through itself alone.²⁶⁵ He thus proves that, in order for transparency of reason to obtain, theoretical reason must be transformed into praxis.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ In the *Encyclopedia Logic*, Hegel explains the method of immanent critique as follows: “The forms of thought must be considered in and of themselves. They are themselves the object as well as the activity of the object. They themselves examine themselves and they must determine for themselves their limits and point up their deficiency in themselves. This is the activity of thinking...that it is to be regarded not as something brought to bear on thought-determinations from outside of them, but instead as immanent in them. (*EnzL*. § 41Z) Following Hegel’s method, Marx lets theoretical reason to examine itself, determine for itself its own limit, and point up its deficiency through itself.

²⁶⁶ One could argue that transparency and elimination of illusion are external moral values, and thus Marx uses external values in his scientific analysis. However, the argument is wrong, since transparency and elimination of falsity are *internal cognitive* values. There cannot be any knowledge, if there is no commitment to elimination of falsity. See Roy Edgley and Roy Bhaskar who make the same argument: (1) This notion of wrongness or mistake...is evaluative, as criticism or appraisal in general is evaluative. [But] it is not...morally evaluative. (Edgley

By proving the primacy of practical reason over theoretical reason, Marx in effect culminates what can be arguably shown to be *the* major drive of development of classical German philosophy, from Kant, to Fichte, to Schelling, to Hegel. Marx's account is relatively distinct from his predecessors in two interrelated ways: First, Marx's derivation of the necessity of praxis is primarily not of a philosophical nature, but it is based on his economic analysis of the structure of society in capitalism. Second, Marx radicalizes the notion of historicity of reason, the notion that has been already present, in a less explicit and worked-out way, in his predecessors. Marx's claim in his mature works is not that theoretical reason is essentially bound up with illusions in *every society*; rather, his claim is that the theoretical reason is essentially bound up with illusions in *capitalist societies*.²⁶⁷

1976:6) (2) "If, then, one is in possession of a theory which explains why false consciousness is necessary, one can pass immediately, without the addition of any extraneous value judgments, to a negative evaluation of the object (generative structure, system of social relations or whatever) that makes that consciousness necessary (and, *ceteris paribus*, to a positive evaluation of action rationally directed at the removal of the sources of false consciousness). Might it not be objected, however, that the fact/value distinction only breaks down in this way because one is committed to the prior valuation that truth is a good, so that one is not deriving a value judgment from entirely factual (natural) premises? *But that truth is a good (ceteris paribus) is not only a condition of moral discourse, it is a condition of any discourse at all. Commitment to truth and consistency apply to factual as much as to value discourse*; and so cannot be seized upon as a concealed (value) premise to rescue the autonomy of values from factual discourse." (Bhaskar 2005 [1979]: 69, my emphasis)

²⁶⁷ Thus, Jindrich Zeleny talks of the "supersession of traditional ontology" in "ontopraxeology" in Marx, and emphasizes that "the beginnings of the ontopraxeological supersession of traditional philosophy.... presupposes a critical perspective on political economy and a grasp of the connection between bourgeois forms of individual life and social life – and metaphysics." (1980:187)

2- The Persistence of Illusion in the Logic of Essence and Hegel's Derivation of the Necessity of Praxis

The task of objective logic is to grasp the structure of individuals. Hegel begins the objective logic with the logic of being. The logic of being defines individuals, as they immediately appear, in their brute givenness. In the logic of being, individuals are in the relation of Gleichgültigkeit with each other; they are “indifferent” towards one another, and their relation with one another remains “external” to what makes them what they are. As relations remain external to the structure of individuals, individuals ultimately remain indeterminable, unanalyzable atoms. The logic of being, thus, fails to determine the structure of individuals.

With failure of the logic of being, Hegel offers the logic of essence to explain the internal relations between individuals, the internal relations that constitute the essence of individuals. The logic of essence shows that the seeming indifference and externality of individuals to one another is an “illusion,” and that in truth individuals are all absolutely interrelated. However, as I have argued in Chapter One, the illusion of indifference of individuals does not disappear in the logic of essence. Such illusion rather constitutes a *necessary moment* of the structure of essence. Although Hegel officially discusses the category of illusion in the beginning of the logic of essence, I have argued that illusion persists throughout the logic of essence. In Chapter Two, I have argued that the “diversity” of individuals, the diversity that obtains by virtue of externality of individuals to one another, is an illusion. Individuals rather become what they are through the relation of “opposition” with each other. In Chapter Three, I have argued that the seeming self-subsistence of individuals is an illusion. Individuals are rather essentially “accidents” of the “totality” of essence, and as accidents they entirely depend on the totality of essence.

In Chapter Five, I have argued that individuals seem to be contingent; it seems that each could simply be different from what it actually is. However, such “contingency” is an illusion that is governed by the “absolute necessity” of essence. We must grasp, then, that the logic of essence, although intends to overcome the externality of being, nonetheless “remains fettered by the externality of the immediate being” [mit dem unmittelbaren Sein als einem ihm auch Äußeren zugleich behaftet ist] (*WdL* I: 58, *SL* 61).

Thus, the objective logic – in its entirety – fails to do what is supposed to do. The logic of being takes individuals to be external to each other, and fails to recognize that such externality is an illusion. The logic of essence does recognize the externality of individuals as illusion, yet it cannot eliminate this illusion. The moment of illusion remains necessary for it. We must conclude, then, that Hegel’s exposition of the objective logic – of *both* the logic of being *and* of the logic of essence – is primarily critical. Indeed, the main drive for the transition from the logic of essence to the logic of Concept, from the objective logic to the subjective logic, is the elimination of the illusion of externality of being. Hegel characterizes the Concept as “ungetrübt”, as “untarnished” by the illusion of immediacy of being (*EnzL* §163) – the Concept is defined through “*disappearance of illusion*” [*Verschwinden des Scheins*] (*EnzL* §242, Hegel’s emphasis). Hegel describes the transition from the logic of essence to the logic of Concept, the transition through which the illusion of externality of being finally disappears, as follows:

In the *Concept*, the realm of *freedom* is disclosed. The Concept is free because the *identity that is in and for itself* and constitutes the necessity of substance, is now also sublated or is *posited being*, and this *posited being* as self-relating is simply that identity. The opacity that the causally related substance have for each other has vanished and become a self-transparent *clarity*, for the originality of their self-subsistence has passed into a posited being; the original substance is original in

that it is only the *cause of itself*, and this is *the substance that has been emancipated into the Concept*. (WdL II:251, SL: 582)²⁶⁸

According to Hegel, the objective logic in its entirety should be considered as an illusion: the objective logic purports to be self-standing by itself, yet it does not recognize – and thereby remains “opaque” to – the fact that the objectivity is not something externally given, but objectivity is already a “posited being”; that is to say, objectivity is already posited by subjectivity. Hegel thus characterizes the transition from the objective logic to the subjective logic in terms of the “unveiling” [Enthüllung] of substance, as the unveiling of the fact that the totality of substance is not self-standing, but that it is produced through subjectivity. Through such transition, subjectivity gains “a self-transparent clarity” [sich selbst durchsichtige Klarheit], and realizes that what seems to be external to it is in fact its own product.

The transition from the logic of essence to the logic of concept, from substance to subject, is not a transition that simply cancels out substance. It is rather the transition that shows, in the famous words of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that truth must be expressed “not merely as substance, but *equally* as subject” (*PhG* §17, my emphasis). Hegel discusses the absolute unity of subjectivity and objectivity in the culminating category of the logic – the “idea” [Die Idee].²⁶⁹ The two major forms of idea for Hegel are the

²⁶⁸ “Im *Begriffe* hat sich daher das Reich der *Freiheit* eröffnet. Er ist das Freie, weil die *an und für sich seiende Identität*, welche die Notwendigkeit der Substanz ausmacht, zugleich als aufgehoben oder als *Gesetzsein* ist und dies Gesetzsein, als sich auf sich selbst beziehend, eben jene Identität ist. Die Dunkelheit der im Kausalverhältnisse stehenden Substanzen füreinander ist verschwunden, denn die Ursprünglichkeit ihres Selbstbestehens ist in Gesetzsein übergegangen und dadurch zur sich selbst durchsichtigen *Klarheit* geworden; die *ursprüngliche Sache* ist dies, indem sie nur die *Ursache ihrer selbst* ist, und dies ist die *zum Begriffe befreite Substanz*.”

²⁶⁹ “The idea can be grasped as *reason* (this is the genuine philosophical meaning of *reason*), further as *subject-object*, as the *unity of the ideal and the real of the finite and the infinite, of the soul and the body*, as the *possibility that has its actuality in itself*, as that the *nature of which can*

theoretical idea, and the practical idea, which then finally get united in the absolute idea.²⁷⁰ Contrary to what has now become commonplace in readings of Hegel – a reading that regards him to be the ultimate “speculative” philosopher – Hegel in the logic forcefully argues for the primacy of the practical idea over the theoretical idea, namely, for the primacy of praxis over theory. The proof of the primacy of the praxis over theory lies, again, in the drive of the Concept to discard its illusion. In theoretical idea, Hegel writes, objectivity

counts just as much as a presupposition that has been merely *found*, as an *apprehension* of a *given*; in fact the activity of the Concept here consists merely in being negative towards itself, restraining itself and making itself passive towards what confronts it in order that the latter [i.e. objectivity] may be able to *show* itself, not as determined by the subject, but as it is in its own self. [Die gesetzte Bestimmung gilt daher ebensosehr als eine nur *gefundene* Voraussetzung, als ein *Auffassen* eines *Gegebenen*, worin die Tätigkeit des Begriffs vielmehr nur darin bestehe, negativ gegen sich selbst zu sein, sich gegen das Vorhandene zurückzuhalten und passiv zu machen, damit dasselbe nicht bestimmt vom Subjekte, sondern wie es in sich selbst ist, sich *zeigen* könne.] (*WdL* II:501, *SL* 786)

The theoretical knowledge in its attempt to grasp the objectivity without bias should repress its own desires and interests. It should thus become “passive,” such that objectivity can speak for itself. Thus, the theoretical knowledge, in effect, must presuppose the objective world as given; it must presuppose the “illusion” of the

only be conceived as existing, and so forth, because in it [the idea] all relationships of the understanding are contained, but in their *infinite* return and identity in themselves.” (*EnzL* §214)

²⁷⁰ In the *Science of Logic* Hegel calls the theoretical idea the “idea of the true” [Die Idee des Wahren], and the practical idea the “idea of the good” [Die Idee des Guten]. More simply, in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, he calls them, respectively, “knowledge” [Erkennen], and the “will” [Das Wollen].

independence of objectivity. There is nothing wrong about this procedure – as long as we aim to know the world, we *must* let the world show itself; we *should not* apply our own ideals and desires to the world – nonetheless, the very fact that we have to presuppose the world as given shows, according to Hegel, the very limits of theoretical knowledge.

It is exactly for the overcoming of the limits of theoretical knowledge that Hegel argues for the primacy of practical idea. In contrast to the theoretical comportment, which takes the world as external, the practical comportment “is bent on determining, in terms of its *purpose*, the world that it finds.” [die vorgefundene Welt nach seinem *Zwecke* zu bestimmen] (*EnzL*. §233).²⁷¹ Quite like Marx, what Hegel means by practical activity in this context is not an instrumental activity, which presupposes the existing world, and aims to fulfill certain aims within it. Such instrumental activity in effect accepts, and indeed reinforces, the “illusion” of independence of the world. Rather, the practical activity meant here is a revolutionary activity, which through *transforming* the world eliminates the illusion of externality of the world, and proves that the world is already the product of subjectivity.

In this limited space, I cannot explain Hegel’s conception the relation of the revolutionary praxis to the objective (social) world. I only emphasize that Hegel rejects two equally one-sided conceptions: firstly, the *voluntarist* conception that conceives of revolutionary praxis as aiming to coercively *superimpose* a (moral) ideal on the real

²⁷¹ The notion that the illusion of externality of world is annihilated through practical activity is also emphasized in the following passage: “What happens, however, in the process of realizing the purpose *in itself* is that *the one-sided subjectivity* and the illusion [Schein] of objective self-sufficiency on hand opposite it are sublated. In seizing the means, *the Concept* posits itself as the object’s essence as it is *in itself*. In the mechanical and chemical process, the self-sufficiency of the object has already evaporated *in itself* and in the course it takes under the dominance of the purpose [unter der Herrschaft des Zwecks], the *illusion* of that self-sufficiency, the negative dimension *opposite the concept*, sublates itself.” (*EnzL*. §212)

world, and secondly, the *evolutionary, fatalist* conception that conceives of the existing totality as changing on its own accord, without the necessity of any explicitly subjective intervention.²⁷² The two conceptions, according to Hegel, are both inadequate, since they both presuppose the objective world as existing on its own, and as *external* to subjectivity. Hegel argues that, in contrast to the “*einseitige Subjektivität*”, the “*one-sided subjectivity*”, which operates in both conceptions, the true revolutionary praxis must be conceived in terms of the “*übergreifende Subjektivität*”, the “*overreaching subjectivity*” which transforms the totality from within. (*EnzL*. §215, Hegel’s emphases)²⁷³ What exactly such “overreaching” of subjectivity over objectivity means in both philosophical and political sense needs another, full, dissertation.

3- The Critique of the Transition to the Concept as the Transition to Communicative Freedom

I should like to finish this conclusion with a critique of Michael Theunissen’s conception of the transition of the logic of essence to the logic of Concept. In his *Sein und Schein: die kritische Funktion der Hegelschen Logik*, Theunissen argues (a) that the logic of essence is primarily critical; (b) that the locus of Hegel’s affirmative logic is the logic of Concept (1978: 38); (c) that the logic of essence is the logic of the relation of

²⁷² Lukács criticizes exactly these two one-sided conceptions of revolutionary praxis – i.e. “economic fatalism” and “ethical utopianism” – in his monumental “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat.” (1971 [1923]: 196)

²⁷³ “In the *negative* unity of the idea the infinite reaches over and beyond the finite, as does thinking over being, subjectivity over objectivity. The unity of the idea is subjectivity, thinking, infinity, and hence it is essentially distinct from the idea as *substance* just as this *overreaching* subjectivity (thinking, infinity) is to be distinguished from the *one-sided* subjectivity (one-sided thinking, one-sided infinity) to which it reduces itself in judging and making determinations.”

domination.²⁷⁴ Based on these points, Theunissen concludes that (d) the logic of the Concept is the logic of the relation of “intersubjective,” “communicative” freedom. By communicative freedom, Theunissen means a freedom through which “the one [individual] experiences the other [individual] not as a limit, but as a condition of his own self-actualization” (ibid: 46). I find it quite astonishing how Theunissen from his critical arguments regarding the logic of essence draws such a reconciliatory, conservative, conclusion of (d). In what follows, I offer a political as well as a logical critique of Theunissen’s thesis that the logic of Concept is the logic of communicative freedom.

From the political point of view, it is unclear how communicative freedom could possibly occur in the context of a society, which is essentially defined by the relations of power. Communicative freedom presupposes that individuals be on an equal footing, such that they could engage in – to use Wilfrid Sellars now famous phrase – the symmetrical activity of “giving and asking for reasons.” I have argued in Chapter Two that when the very constitution of individuals is the product of the asymmetrical relation of power, the equality obtained is merely an illusory equality – it is the equality with regard to the terms that the powerful dictates. How could a capitalist and a worker be possibly on an equal footing in a communication when the two are structurally defined in opposition to each other; when the former sets the rules of the possible communication to which the latter must necessarily abide?

It seems that Theunissen offers a Kantian interpretation of Hegel: although individuals are constituted by the asymmetrical relations of power in the *phenomenal* world, they are nonetheless free to engage in the game of giving and asking for reasons in

²⁷⁴ See the Introduction for a more detailed discussion of Theunissen.

the *noumenal* world. If we take Hegel's criticism of Kant's two-world conception seriously, as we should, we cannot conceive of the transition of essence to Concept to be an unmediated transition from the phenomenal world of power to the noumenal world of communicative freedom. In order for communicative freedom to obtain, there must be first a *revolutionary praxis*, which transforms the one single world that exists from within, thereby making the communicative freedom *structurally* possible.

From the logical point of view, I find Theunissen's interpretation of the logic of Concept as the theory of communicative freedom to be question begging from the very beginning. The question is this: Why Hegel, after developing the concept of totality in the entire second and third part of the logic of essence, should suddenly abandon it for the sake a theory of communicative freedom, which is based on the interrelation of two individuals? The logic of essence establishes that the totality is prior to individuals and constitutes them. The more plausible view is that, Hegel – rather than abandoning the concept of totality in order to begin anew from the interrelation of two individuals – shows how the totality of essence is *transformed* into the totality of the Concept. As I have argued, such *self-transformation* of totality should be understood in terms of the “overreaching subjectivity” which transforms objectivity such that objectivity accords to subjectivity, and that overreaching subjectivity is in effect nothing but the revolutionary praxis.

Theunissen's main argument is based on Hegel's usage of the concept of “love” [Liebe] to explain the freedom of the Concept. According to Theunissen, the freedom that

obtains through love is communicative.²⁷⁵ He draws a strong connection between Hegel's conception of freedom as love, and Christian revealed theology. Indeed, he believes that Hegel's conception of freedom and Christian theology are thoroughly intertwined, such that they mutually ground each other.²⁷⁶ I do not want to enter into a theological dispute here, and I grant Theunissen that the freedom that obtains through love between two individuals is communicative. I also grant him that such conception of freedom and love is pivotal for the young Hegel in his Frankfurt years. However, all these do not mean that Hegel in his much-later-written *Science of Logic* uses the same concept of love, as he did then. Indeed, in the *Science of Logic* Hegel does not indulge in theological thinking, and he allows himself to use the concept of love *only in one single passage* of the logic of Concept. Theunissen, without quoting the entire passage, refers to it to support his interpretation. This is the passage in its entirety:

The universal is therefore *free* power; it is itself and overreaches over its other, but without *doing violence* to it; on the contrary, the universal is at rest in its other as *in its own*. We have called it free power, but it could also be called *free love and boundless blessedness*, for it bears itself towards its other as towards *its own self*; in it, it has returned to itself. [Das Allgemeine ist daher die *freie* Macht; es ist es selbst und greift über sein Anderes über; aber nicht als ein *Gewaltsames*, sondern das vielmehr in demselben ruhig und *bei sich selbst* ist. Wie es die freie Macht genannt worden, so könnte es auch die *freie Liebe* und *schrackenlose Seligkeit* genannt werden, denn es ist ein Verhalten seiner zu dem

²⁷⁵ "Als Freiheit definiert Hegel 'die Verhältnissweise des Begriffs'. Da aber der Begriff selber Liebe ist, muß die mit ihm herkommende Freiheit eine bestimmte sein: die *kommunikative*." (ibid:46, Theunissen's emphasis)

²⁷⁶ "Universale Kommunikationstheorie und Theologie hängen so untrennbar zusammen. Wie die Kommunikationstheorie der Hegelschen Logik zu verstehen sei, verrät ihre theologische Fundierung, und umgekehrt läßt sich der kommunikationstheoretischen Absicht entnehmen, was da 'Theologie' heißt: Logos *des* Logos, der, nach dem Lieblingsjünger auch Hegels, *Liebe ist* (1 Joh 4,8,16)." (ibid: 50)

Unterschiedenen nur als zu sich selbst; in demselben ist es zu sich selbst zurückgekehrt.] (WdL II:277, SL 603)

Hegel here does identify freedom of the Concept with love, but there is no trace of mutual, symmetrical, intersubjective, communicative freedom in the conception of love that he offers. To the contrary, he defines the freedom of the Concept as the “power” that has the ability to “overreach” itself, and, by doing so, to constitute its other such that the Concept would find its own self in its other. Such conception of freedom qua power, rather than being symmetrical, is emphatically asymmetrical. The relation of freedom here is *not* between two individuals – as is the case in the intersubjective, communicative freedom – but between the *totality* of subjectivity and the *totality* of objectivity. It is a relation through which the totality of subjectivity manages to form the totality of objectivity.²⁷⁷ Such “free power” or love in effect is nothing but the revolutionary

²⁷⁷ True that for Hegel the Concept is an individual, but the individuality of Concept is not the empirical, common sense individuality. It is rather the *individuality of totality*, which results from the self-transformation of the totality of essence. Hegel thus writes, “The individual is the same as the actual, with the difference that the individual has gone forth from the Concept and is accordingly *posited* as universal, as the negative identity with itself...The individuality, however, is not to be taken in the sense of only *immediate* individuality in terms of which we speak of individual things, human beings...Rather, individuality, the subject, is the Concept *posited* as the totality.” (*EnzL*. §163) Indeed, Hegel does not hesitate to insist that the revolutionary praxis is always the revolutionary praxis of the totality that obtains by collective action of individuals, and that within the revolutionary praxis of the totality the individual is simply perishable: “The individual being is some side or other of the Idea, but for this still other actualities are needed, actualities that likewise appear as obtaining particularly for themselves; the Concept is realized only in them together and in their relation. The individual taken by itself [*für sich*] does not correspond to its concept; this limitation of its existence constitutes its *finitude* and its demise.” (*EnzL*. §213)

praxis²⁷⁸, and it is no accident that Hegel uses the same term “overreaching”

[Übergreifen] in order to describe the structure of both.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ That the subjectivity does not “do violence” to objectivity makes it no less revolutionary. The phrase is meant here to refute the *voluntaristic* conception of revolutionary praxis.

²⁷⁹ To be fair to Theunissen, he recognizes the importance of the *totality* of Concept, insofar as he takes Hegel’s conception of love to consist of two aspects, one, the intersubjective love that occurs between individuals, and, two, God’s love towards individuals that obtains through his “condescendence” [Herunterlassung] in the religious community. Theunissen writes, “nach christlicher Theologie ist vor aller Liebe der Menschen zueinander und zu Gott dieser selbst in Liebe zu den Menschen hinabgestiegen. In der Begriffslogik verhält es sich nun nicht etwas so, daß Hegel Liebe als anthropologisches Phänomen thematisierte, und die theologischen Implikationen unausgesprochen ließe. Im Gegenteil: Unmittelbar thematisch macht er nur die göttliche Liebesbewegung, derart, daß erst aus ihr der intersubjektivitätstheoretischen Sinn seiner Rede sich erschließt.” (ibid:43). Insofar as Theunissen does recognize the importance of totality (or God) for securing the communicative freedom, his conception remains far superior to the vague and indeterminate Sellarsian conception of “the *space* of reasons,” or Rawlsian conception of “reflective *equilibrium*,” both of which assume that the mere activity of giving and asking for reasons can abolish the relations of power, and that such activity, on its own, can ground itself. Theunissen’s addition of the concept of totality to the picture of love notwithstanding, the very basic fact that the logic of Concept is *not* about intersubjective freedom remains true all the same. (In an earlier essay, Theunissen interprets the logic of Concept as the logic of *Übergreifen*, and interprets Hegel’s idealism in terms of *Übergreifen* of subjectivity over objectivity. In the said essay, he again interprets Hegel’s logic in theological terms, but this time he regards Hegel’s theology as “theology of domination” [Herrschaftstheologie]: “Größe, aber auch Grenze seiner [Hegels] Religionsphilosophie besteht darin, daß sie mit folgerichtiger Ausschließlichkeit Herrschaftstheologie ist und sein will.” (1978 [1975]: 355) In the book *Sein und Schein*, however, Theunissen, conceives of Hegel’s theology in the logic of Concept, as mentioned above, to be revealed theology of communicative freedom. The very fact that Theunissen oscillates between the two theological conceptions would indicate how his interpretation of the logic of Concept in terms of communicative freedom is rather forced on Hegel.)

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Note: The bibliography of the main primary works is in the beginning of the dissertation.

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Curriculum Vitae

Arash Abazari

Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellow

arash.abazari@gmail.com, aabazar1@jhu.edu

AREAS OF SPECIALTY

Hegel and German Idealism – Marx – Critical Theory and the Marxist Tradition – Social and Political Philosophy

AREAS OF COMPETENCE

20th Century Continental Philosophy – Philosophy of Social Sciences – History of Modern Philosophy

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University, 2009-17 (Defended March 13, 2017)

Dissertation: *Hegel's Logic of Essence and the Ontology of Power in Capitalism*

Adviser: Dean Moyar

Internal Readers: Eckart Förster, Yitzhak Melamed, Hent de Vries

External Reader: Terry Pinkard

M.A. Continental Philosophy, University of Essex, UK, 2007-8

M.A. with Distinction

Thesis: The Concept of Spirit in Hegel's Philosophy

Adviser: Wayne Martin

M.D. Medical Doctorate, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran, 1997–2005

Other Visiting Student, Hegel-Archiv, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2008-9

Adviser: Walter Jaeschke

EMPLOYMENT

Fall 2017 – Fall 2020

Research Post-Doctoral Fellow at Institute for Fundamental Sciences (IPM), Tehran, Iran

Fall 2016 – August 2017

Instructor at Expository Writing Program at the Johns Hopkins University

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed Articles

“Hegel's *Schein* as Ideology of Equality and Freedom in Capitalism”, *Hegel-Bulletin* (accepted and forthcoming)

“Opposition instead of Recognition: The Social Significance of the Determinations of Reflection in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (revise and resubmit)

Reviews

Review of Lisa Herzog: *Inventing the Market. Smith, Hegel, and Political Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, in: *Hegel-Studien*, Band 49, 2014

Review of Alfredo Berges, *Der freie Wille als Rechtsprinzip: Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung des Rechts bei Hobbes und Hegel*. Hamburg: Meiner 2012, in: *Hegel Bulletin*, 37(2), 324-329

Review of Amir Mohseni, *Abstrakte Freiheit: zum Begriff des Eigentums bei Hegel*, Hamburg: Meiner 2015, in: *Hegel Bulletin* (forthcoming)

Review of Terry Pinkard, *Does History Make Sense?: Hegel on the Historical Shapes of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, in: *Hegel Bulletin* (forthcoming)

Review of Filippo Ranchio, *Dimensionen der zweiten Natur: Hegels praktische Philosophie*. Hamburg: Meiner, 2016, in: *Hegel Bulletin* (commissioned)

Contributions to Public Journals

Interview with Terry Pinkard about Hegel’s Philosophy of History, (interviewed and translated into Farsi), Andishe-ye-Pouya, Tehran, March 2013

Interview with Allen Wood about the concept of Equality, Naghd-e-Eghtesad-e-Siyasi, Tehran, December 2013

Book translated

Der Meteor & Stranitzky und der Nationalheld, Friedrich Duerrenmatt, Cheshmeh Publisher, Tehran, 2009 (translated from German to Farsi)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (At Johns Hopkins)

Sole Instructor (Designed and Taught)

Expository Writing Program (“What is Freedom?”) – Fall 2017 and Spring 2018
Marx: Critique of Political Economy – Fall 2014, Dean’s Teaching Fellow
Philosophic Classics – Summer 2014
Introduction to Social Philosophy – Summer 2013
Philosophy and the French Revolution – Fall 2013
Introduction to Marx – Fall 2012

Assistant Instructor (Leading Discussion Sessions)

Introduction to Greek Philosophy (with R. Bett) - Fall 2011
Philosophy of Religion (with S. Gross) – Spring 2012
Bioethics (with H. Bok) – Fall 2012
Justice and Health (with H. Bok) – Spring 2013
Philosophic Classics (with D. Moyer) – Fall 2013
Introduction to Modern Philosophy (with Y. Melamed) – Spring 2014
Introduction to Modern Philosophy (with M. Williams) – Spring 2015

AWARDS AND HONORS

Mellon/ACLS Dissertation completion fellowship, 2015-6
Dean's Teaching Fellowship, Johns Hopkins University (Competitive fellowship for teaching across the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences), Fall 2014
MA with distinction, University of Essex, UK, 2008
Five-year fellowship awarded to all incoming doctoral students, department of philosophy, Johns Hopkins University, 2009-2014
Ranked 9th on Iranian University Entrance Examination among 408,789 participants, 1997

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Graduate Adviser, Prometheus, Undergraduate Philosophy Journal, Johns Hopkins, 2011-12
Referee, European Journal of Philosophy, 2012

PROFESSIONIONAL MEMBERSHIP

American Philosophical Association

LANGUAGES

Farsi (native)
German (fluent)
Arabic (reading knowledge of classical Arabic texts)

REFERENCES

Dean Moyer, Department of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins, 410-516-7523, dmoyer(at)jhu.edu
Terry Pinkard, Department of Philosophy, Georgetown University, 1 202-687-7484 pinkard1(at)georgetown.edu
Yitzhak Melamed, Department of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University, 410-516-0568, ymelame1(at)jhu.edu
Eckart Förster, Department of Philosophy, Johns Hopkins University, 410-516-8041, eckart.forster(at)jhu.edu
Hent de Vries, The Humanities Center, Johns Hopkins University, 410-516-0474, hentdevries(at)jhu.edu
Wayne Martin, Department of Philosophy, University of Essex, 01206-873405, wmartin(at)essex.ac.uk